

The Exceeding Great  
**COMFORT**  
AND  
**BENEFIT**

Of having walked before GOD in

**TRUTH,**

And with a

**PERFECT HEART,**

And of having done that

*Which is good in his Sight.*

Set forth in several Discourses on

*Isaiah 38. 2, 3.*

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By *Richard Stafford*, formerly of *Magdalen*  
Hall in *OXFORD*.

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*For our Rejoycing is this, the Testimony of our Conscience, that in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity, not with Fleahly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God we have had our Conversation in the World, 2 Cor. 1. 12.*

*I have Fought a Good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that Love his appearing, 2 Tim. 4. 7. 8.*

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# TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

**A** *S the Apostle did Write to those of his time, so I (according to the knowledge given me) would willingly do the same as to the People of this my Generation and Countrey. Yea, I think it meet as long as I am in this Tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in Remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this Tabernacle: Moreover I will Endeavour, that you may be able after my Decease to have these things always in Remembrance. Which good Endeavour of St. Peter was so brought to pass, only by his Writing down those very Words, which are now Printed, and thereby made known unto us. For if Peter or Paul had only spoken those Words unto the few Christians then present with them, but had never Written them, they would have been like A Voice Crying in the Wilderness, which is emphatically remarked concerning John Baptist by Esaias in Mat. 3. 3. for John spake four or five Sentences, which are there Recorded and Written for him by the Evangelist: But he himself Writing nothing hereof; was as a Voice of one crying in the Wilderness, which we know instantly perishes in the utterance, and seems as nothing afterwards. In the Wilderness, thereby is signified, the Church or Servants of God, they being fewest in Number, as that place hath fewest Inhabitants.*

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*His Servant Job, (who had the character from God to speak of him the thing that was right) saith on this wise, Oh that my Words were now Written, Oh that they were Printed in a Book; That they were Graven with an Iron Pen and Etched in the Rock for ever. Job 19. 23, 24. Moreover, There is the express Commandment of God to Isaiah, Now go, Write it before them in a Table, and note it in a Book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever, Isa. 30, 8. A word spoken or a voice uttered Perishes in the Speaking and Utterance; And tho' it never so much affects the Auditory for the present time, yet it goes off as a Flash and is soon forgotten, both by Speaker and Hearers; But a Word or Sentence written, that remains, and People may at any time have Recourse and turn unto it. Hereby also it may be effectually Prevented that People shall not become forgetful Hearers of the Word, as to which the Scripture saith, Whoso is not a forgetful Hearer, but a doer of the Work, this Man shall be Blessed in his deed. And accordingly the Prophet having obeyed the aforementioned Commandment of God herein, so as to have Wrote down his Words, they stand and remain longer then any Gates of Brass or Bars of Iron, or the most Ancient Buildings in the World; for time hath defaced them, and the place of them knoweth it no more. But the words of Isaiah are as fresh, inviolate, sound and perfect to and at this very day, all one as they were in the first Moment he uttered them, or as they were in that hour wherein he first Wrote them down, God having been pleased to preserve his Writings in the World.*

*For by the way there hath been great Opposition against these kind of things, by Satan and his Incarnate Instruments, and the Powers of Darknes, The Bible it self (wherein then were all the Books of Moses) was very nigh lost in the days of Josiah, when there was but one Copy thereof accidentally found to have been hidden in the Temple. It being supposed that some Idolatrous King a little before had Destroyed or Burnt them all. As the like was usual with the Persecutors of the first Christians. Who again would hide them, and rather lose their lives then give up and surrender their Bibles. Wherein they were more Noble then some now a days, who say, They do not much value the outward Letter, if they should be tried but the tenth part so far, for they say they have it in their Heart.*

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but by their good leave, it would not long remain in their heart, if neither they nor others for them had it not also Written in Ink and Paper for to turn unto, Read and seek out of it at any time.

This also discovers the Sin and Hypocrisie of those of the Romish Church, who say they are Christians, but they are not, but of the Synagogue of Satan and Antichrist; for they also have used the very same methods to Suppress or Burn all such Bib'es as are in the National Tongue of any Countrey, and all those Boos which contain words of Truth which spring up any where against their own Errour, Idolatry and Superstition. Which again is the duty of all such as are Children of the Truth to preserve and keep a foot in the World as the others seek to destroy and suppress them; for as to this the Rule is certain (although it is not altogether so clearly apprehended by many) That as words of Goodness and Truth are kept up above board, and made known Openly and Universally on this Earth where Stans seat is; So his Kingdom doth accordingly by degrees fill and lose Ground in the World. As contrariwise the Kingdom or Interest of Christ (who is the Eternal Word) would so much increase and prevail in the World, According as good words and true words and right words are made Publick and received in the World. This is a Truth of great Importance. would to God it were understood thoroughly by all Persons (of whatever opinion or denomination for they should not seek their own party, but the things of Jesus-Christ) and done accordingly

Another Reason of my willingness to write and Publish Books (not which Minister to Contentions and Strivings, for they are unprofitable and vain, Titus 3. 9. But such as are to the use of Godly edifying, may be gathered from what is said in psal 102. 18. This shall be written for the Generation to come, and the People which shall be created shall praise the Lord. For by my sending Books or Printed papers unto them I may Preach unto People at many miles distance, and put them in mind that they may obey the word of the Lord as in my presence, so much more in my absence, Hereby also People may be able after my Decease, to have these things always in remembrance; That being Dead, I may yet speak.

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Heb 11. 4. and thus Preach to the succeeding Generation even whilst my Body shall be in the silent Chambers of the Grave, and leave my mind behind mee, in my Books and writings, even when my Soul is gone out into the other World; That the people which shall be created may be thence exhorted, put in mind or instructed to praise the Lord.

The more universal and enduring (If any mans Work abide, He shall receive a Reward, 1 Cor. 3. 14.) any good is, it is so much the better, and should rather be endeavoured to be done. Whereupon it appears that the Writing and Publishing of such a Book as The Practice of Piety, or the Whole Duty of Man if it should be alike received in the World, would be a doing more good throughout this Nation, and for the Generations to come, then if one should Preach constantly every day into the most Numerous Congregations for Twenty, Forty, or Sixty Years, and longer none usually doth.

But here it may be surmised and said, Of making many Books there is no end, Which Solomon doth not here find fault withal, for himself Wrote several; but he brings this saying in to shew what should be the Epitome and Tendency of them all, Namely, To fear God and keep his Commandments; Which, until it be done Universally and Constantly by all People whatever, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for so is his requiring and expectation in these days, Jer. 31. 33, 34. The Wisdom of God saith as to this Matter, For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line. (The Holy Ghost doubles it over and over) here a little and there a little, Isa. 28. 10. Since the Wisdom of God hath Ordained that it should be so, and it must be so; This should henceforwards put to silence that Ignorant Objection of foolish Men, who say, What need is there of such abundance of Books and Sermons in the World? Let such awfully Remember and Consider it again, That the Foolishness of God is Wiser then Men, and his own Spirit saith expressly, For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little.

And

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*And further by these my Son be Admonished, in this thing to admire and comply with the Wisdom of God; for by his Ordaining that it should be so and it must be so, herein, Yea, he Loved the People. Wherefore they should do according to what is after Written, All his Saints are in thy hand, and they sat down at thy Feet: Every one shall receive of thy Words, Deut. 33, 3. Wherefore again People should be Admonished, in no wise to reject (see John 12. 48.) this Counsel of God against themselves, but to receive of his Words; for the Saints and Servants of God do receive of the Words of God, Every one shall receive of thy Words.*

*I have one thing more to Admonish the People of this my Generation and Countrey of, and to exhort them unto, which doth concern them all. Say I these things as a Man, for doth not the Law and the Gospel say the very same? for it was the Requiring of God of old time, Who is the same to day, yesterday, and for ever; That none should appear Empty before the Lord. But every one was to do somewhat according to his Ability, They that could not go to the price of a Lamb, were to bring a pair of Turtle Doves, or two young Pigeons. And by what is written in the Gospel of her who Cast in her Mite (whereof two make a Farthing) into the Offerings of God. By this it appears that even-day Labourers and Vine Dressers, yea the poorest of the People, should not serve God with that which cost them nothing, 2 Sam. 24. 24. But it is expected from them, that even they should Honour the Lord with their Substance (for he is to be served, by all that is within and without us, even with the Fruits of our Labour) and consecrate their Gain unto the Lord, and their Substance unto the Lord of the whole Earth, Mich. 4. 13. Towards the Publishing and Propagation of his Eternal Truth, according to their several Power and Ability. For, if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*

*But this is yet more especially required and expected from them that are Rich in this World; for the Gospel (and miserable will be the end of those who shall not obey the Gospel) doth Charge them that they be Rich in good Works, ready to Distribute, willing to Communicate. This is a Faithful saying,*

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saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly; That they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good Works: These things are Good and Profitable unto Men. So that the most High God requires and expects from them more especially that they should Honour him with their Substance, and give out of their Abundance, and Proportionably to their Ability, be ready to distribute for the Service and Propagation of his Eternal Truth. If they would buy good and Godly Books, and give them to Poor People, laying an Injunction upon them, and having a Promise from them to read and consider thoroughly of the things contained therein; This would be the best kind of Charity, for this would be a doing good to their Immortal Souls: Whereas Common and Outward Alms is only a Temporal kindness unto the dying Body. As it is Written, Be not thou Afraid when one is made Rich, when the Glory of his House is Increased, for when he dieth, he shall carry nothing away; his Glory shall not descend after him. So it is sensibly seen that Rich People do Sicken and die all one as the Poor and Needy; And then they will find, To what purpose was this Waste? For that same Money which they expended in fine Cloaths, Gayety or Retinue, in making a Figure in the World (as a Dream when one awaketh, so O Lord when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their Image) in Gluttony and Drunkenness, which is making provision for the Flesh to fulfil the Lusts thereof, in Pride Pleasure, Prodigality, Gaming, or other vain things, This might have been given to the Poor, or it might have been Expended in making known thy Truth, Isa. 38. 19. which seems to be the best of Works for the Reason afore-mentioned; and then it would have done themselves more good, and have stood them in more stead then the Riches they used to the hurt of the owners.

If the Rich People have not heretofore, or shall not henceforward (that day is coming on and hastning when, even the Rich among the People shall intreat thy Favour, Psal. 45. 12.) Obey and do according to this Exhortation and Admonition; The word of God doth find them out, and this cometh to pass because of what is Written, There is an Evil which I have seen under the Sun, and it is common among Men. A Man to whom God hath given Riches, Wealth and Honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his Soul of all that he desireth, yet



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yet God giveth him not Power to Eat thereof, but a Stranger eateth it, this is Vanity and an Evil Disease. *Even so God giveth not to such Power or an Heart (O that there were an Heart in them to fear me, saith God, And, Wherefore is there a Price put in the Hand of a Fool to get Wisdom, and he hath no Heart to it?) either to give unto the Poor, or to consecrate their Gain and Substance unto the Lord, by Expending it for the Service of his Truth. But as our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, speaketh Pertinently, Properly, and truly when he twice in the same Chapter calleth it the Mammon of Unrighteousness, the Unrighteous Mammon, Luke 16. 9. 11. In the Margent opposite to Mammon in both places, it is Riches, for they are most commonly gotten by Unrighteous means, viz. By such means as are contrary unto or different from that Great and Compleat Rule of Righteousness in Scripture. Even so again it is most commonly seen, That what is got by Unrighteous and Sinful means, is likewise spent in Unrighteous and Sinful ways; as such are those aforementioned. And therefore they hate the Light and the Truth, which would manifest and reprove their Evil ways; For the same reason they are Rebellious against it, and would not have it come forth. According to that other true saying of Jesus Christ, And this is the Condemnation that Light is come into the World, and Men loved Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds were Evil, for every one that doeth Evil, hateth the Light, neither cometh to the Light, least his Deeds should be reprov'd. In the Margent it is discovered, But he that doeth Truth, cometh to the Light, that his Deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. But when the Lord cometh after a long time (which yet will certainly come at Death and Judgment) and reckoneth with those Servants for this Talent committed unto, and intrusted with them, then it will be seen and discerned, what way will be found best to have Used or Employed the same, or by sinful Covetousness, to have the rust of their Silver and Gold be a Witness against them, and to have heaped up Treasure together for the last days, James 5. 3.*

*As for mine own part I have put my self to Difficulties, Disadvantages and Loss, as to my Worldly Substance, for to my Power (I bear Record) yea and beyond my Power I was willing*



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willing that the following Words may see Light, and that these Children which are come to the Birth may be brought forth. But to allude unto 2 Cor. 8. 13, 14. *This might be eased by an Equality, that now at this time their abundance may be a supply for my want; I mean by the Charitable Contribution of Christian People, who receive the Truth in the love thereof. For this work of the Lord is common, and should be the joynt Endeavour of all his Servants, For thy Servants take pleasure in her Stones, and Favour the Dust thereof, Psal. 102. 14. which is the least thing belonging to it. So then they should help and forward every least thing that tends to the building up of Zion: As the certainty of the words of Truth doth build up the People of God (which is Spiritually Zion) in their most Holy Faith, and towards making them a People prepared for the Lord. Whether it will be so or not according to the Intimation here given; However I hope and trust that Almighty God will be pleased to pardon mine Ignorance and Infirmities, and Graciously accept of these my Labours and endeavours in making known his Truth.*

*And because that Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but God gives the increase, therefore I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord-Jesus-Christ, Humbly beseeching him to give his Blessing unto, and accompany with his Spirit, what is hereafter written, that they may appear to be upright, even words of Truth; And that they may be as nails fastened by the Masters of Assemblies, which are given from one Shepherd.*

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SERMON

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# SERMON I.

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Isaiah XXXVIII. 2, 3.

*Then Hezekiah turned his Face toward the Wall and Prayed unto the Lord; And said, Remember now O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a Perfect Heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight, and Hezekiah wept sore.*

**I** Have Written and Preached, and (*Blessed be God most high that performeth all things for me*) have caused to be Printed and Published, (*This shall be Written for the Generation to come; and the People which shall be Created shall Praise the Lord, Psal. 102. 18.*) Six several Sermons or Discourses on the foregoing Verse. Now the Order, Method and Course of our Ministry, requires to speak some things from the words above-mentioned.

In the shutting up and conclusion of that Book it was said, that all the Sermons and Preaching in the World, if they be rightly and truly managed, were all to the very same end and purpose, To instruct and exhort us, *To set our Souls in order for we shall die*; Or that they may be *set in order* (which was explained to be in a readiness, and that nothing be wanting in them) against the time they shall go out of these Bodies. We do hence see what is to be done then, when that time comes. So that by those

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words we are Inſtructed how to die, or how to behave, fit and prepare our ſelves a little before, and as we come to die. But now in the Words which I have here choſen for my Text, we are taught what we muſt do throughout all our Life. So that in the three firſt Verſes of this excellent Chapter, we are informed and directed how to live and how to die; What we muſt do in our life time, and what in the Day of Sickneſs and of Death: And what would Man have more in order to his ſalvation, Security and Happineſs, then to know how to live and how to die. Truly, there cannot be more deſired then theſe two things, For herein is Comprised the whole State of his Duration, both in this World and alſo in his Paſſage into the next. for inasmuch as the Spirit ſaith, *Bleſſed are the Dead that die in the Lord*, Rev. 14. 13. We may aſſuredly gather, that they who live well (as ſuch do who live unto the Lord) will alſo die well, and will die in the Lord. Again, they that die well, or who die in the Lord, will be bleſſed for evermore, even ſo as to receive, partake of and Inherit that *Bleſſing which the Lord hath Commanded, even Life for evermore*, Pſal. 133. 3.

When I firſt entred upon my Miniſtry, I promiſed unto my Hearers, that I would inſiſt only upon uſeful and profitable Subjects, which I have obſerved accordingly, and yet more chiefly when I have ſpoken of theſe things. I do hereby appeal to the ſeveral Hearts and Conſciences of thoſe who ſhall Hear or Read this, Can ye think of a more profitable and uſeful Subject of Diſcourſe then for ye to be put in mind and directed, how ye ought to live, and how ye ought to die?

The Words of our Text, are *Hezekiahs Prayer and Saying unto the Lord*, in the preſence and hearing of his Prophet, which may be ſuppoſed by way of Answer to that meſſage and ſaying of *Iſaiah* from the Lord unto him, which was, *Set thine Houſe in order, for thou ſhalt die and not live*; And thereupon this behaviour and reply of *Hezekiah* is thus recorded, *Then Hezekiah turned his Face unto the Wall*, &c.

Now what God ſpake in time paſt unto *Hezekiah* by the Prophet, in theſe laſt Days he doth ſpeak the ſame unto each Man or Woman, in his word and by the Miniſtry

stry thereof, all one, as if he now called them severally by their Names, such an one and such an one, yea, every one of ye, *Set thine House in order, for thou shalt die and not live.*

It is certain, That every one cannot make so Good an Answer and Return hereupon as *Hezekiah* did ; for as all are *Transgressors from the Womb*, so the greater part of Men and Women do continue so. But to make such a comfortable Answer and Return, is only the distinguishing *Lot*, and Portion of the *Generation of thy Children*, the true Saints and Servants of the Lord.

There is a wide difference between sudden wishes and real continued performances : For the first, even Sinners and Hypocrites, the Ignorant and Ungodly have some times good wishes and wouldings towards God. O that they did please him and were at Peace with him, when indeed they do not go about so to do and obtain it. But the Righteous and Godly know it is vain and deceitful work before the Lord ; (*Cursed is He, that doth the Work of the Lord deceitfully*) Unless their Good Resolutions be turned into actual performances. For even a wicked *Balaam*, could and did cry out before hand upon a serious Fit and Mood, *Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my last end be like his*, Numbers 23. 10. When yet for all this Good Expression, he did soon after *Love the Wages of unrighteousness*, 2 Pet. 2. 15. Even so there are in the Wicked and Children of Disobedience, some secret and inward thoughts, that it would be better for them if they did lead a Godly, Obedient and Righteous Life ; But notwithstanding all these Good Thoughts, *Like the Dog they return to their Vomit* ; and so they continue and persist still in their former Ungodliness and Irreligion, Sin and Transgression. But it is only a Godly *Hezekiah*, or one like unto *Hezekiah*, who can make that most sweet and comfortable Review, and Appeal to him that is Invisible, and have their own Heart and Conscience within them, Witnessing to the Truth, Reality and Sincerity thereof, *Remember now O Lord I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in Truth and with a Perfect Heart, and have done that which is Good in thy sight, and Hezekiah wept sore.* Not for Grief and Vexation that he had done so. In no



wife ; but through that abundance of Comfort and Rejoycing, which upon this very same Reflection did hence stream and flow in upon his Soul. For I trow and assure ye, that such a Reflection or Remembrance is better, and will contribute more to ones future, which indeed, is the only real and enduring Happinefs ; *Then to have lived in Pleasure on the Earth, to have been wanton, or to have nourished our hearts as in the Day of Slaughter,* James 5. 5. For it may be sensibly perceived even now, that the Pleasures of this life (However, sweet they may seem to some in Enjoyment and whilst they were present ; yet as they choke the word, *Luke 8. 13.* So they make Death bitter and more terrible. When a Man comes to die, if he hath heretofore lived in all the Pleasures, Riches and Honour of this World, he is never the better for having had them ; but rather he suspects his condition to be the worse, in that they have occasioned so much the more Sin and Guilt, and Pride unto him, as to which, he must go away to give an Account ; and this *Account will be with Grief and not with Joy, which will be unprofitable for him ;* He being then to undergo so much Pain, Loss and Punishment, for the sin which he Committed in the Days of Flesh. And then also the Soul, makes inquiry what his Good she hath done in order unto, or towards God ; and as from the other sort doth arise *fearful Expectation,* so the having done Good will stand in some stead, and yield Comfort and Hope, and Assurance and Boldness in that Day. The only want and failure here will be, if there hath been any Good done, would God there had been more of it and it had been better, but that cannot be now neither, for care should have been taken as to this sooner and before ; However, the Soul must go away to give Account and receive for it as it is.

It is probable by these two kinds of Speech, *Hezekiah was sick unto Death, then Hezekiah turned his Face towards the Wall,* That Hezekiah was at this very time, when the Prophet *Isaiah* came unto him and said thus, that then he was lying in his Bed of Sicknes and Languishing ; As yet more fully appears by what is after Written, *When he had been sick and was recovered of his sickness,* ver. 9. And then afterwards, mention is made of his *Going up to the House*



*House of the Lord*, ver. 22. Which he was not able to do whilst he was there. And as it is elsewhere Written, *The Lord will strengthen him upon the Bed of Languishing ; Thou wilt make all his Bed in his Sickness*, Psal. 41. 3. Now these things are Written in the Book of the Lord, for our Hope and Comfort, for our Learning and Admonition, that we should also sometimes in thought and supposal, throw our selves before hand upon a Sick and Dying Bed. That is, put the case and imagine it so to our selves, before we come to lye upon it in Deed and Reality ; For we shall never be the sooner sick in Conceit for thus doing, but only thereby we may be the better strengthened in the Soul, and Inner Man against and at the very time, when our outward Body shall be actually Languishing in the Bed.

For to this agree, two alike Speeches of the Antient Heathen *Pliny*, which are near to the same purpose and signification. The one whereof is, *This is the sum of all Philosophy* (which was given to regulate and make better the manners of Men) *If we would be so in our Health, as we profess and resolve we will be when we are sick*. The other saying is a little further improved, *This is the Sum and Height of Wisdom, if we would do those things whilst living, which we shall wish we had done when we come to die*. Now if with these two sayings, we take in also the Knowledge of God, considering our Subjection and Duty to him that is Invisible, as also with the *Grace and Truth that came by Jesus Christ*. In that *Revelation* which God made unto mankind by and through him, which speak of things that must shortly come to pass, which pertain to the Kingdom of God and also to us Men, both as to what we are now, and what we shall be. Let there be but the full assurance of Faith concerning these things, and what kind of thoughts will then naturally and necessarily spring up in the Soul, just as that is Gasping, and she is departing from the Body even quite contrary unto, and vastly different from what we had whilst in the midst of Life, Health, Strength and Vigour. For then we were, if not wholly and only, yet chiefly and Principally taken up with and busied about Worldly and Visible things. But do but throughly conceive thy self to be once a dying,

then the *Mind* will be upon the *Invisible Things* of the other World, whereinto the *Soul* is just going. If you do but hold out a Bag of Money, or even necessary and wholesome Food, to a man, when he just Lies at the Point of Death: If he hath any Thoughts or Apprehensions at all, they are quite of another and different Kind than what he had formerly concerning the same. For however he did formerly seek after them both, yet now he hath no Appetite or Desire after the one, nor stomach after the other. But there doth arise an Antipathy and Loathing of them both; or rather a Knowledge, that now his breath is going forth, *there is no help in them*; for they cannot hold it in beyond the *Appointed Time*; and now the Time, yea the *Set-Time* is come, they cannot continue Being, much less can they give an *Happy Being*. Their *Silver* and their *Gold* shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the *Wrath* of the Lord: They shall not satisfy their *Souls*, nor fill their *Bowels*, because it is the stumbling block of their *Iniquity*, Ezek. 7. 19. The same doth now appear as to all our past foregoing *Life*, whether it be Twenty, Thirty or Forty Years; so it will be as to those who shall arrive at Threescore and Ten, or Fourscore, or Ninety Years; It is all but as yesterday. when it is past, and as a Watch in the Night, Psal. 90. 4. Nay, it is not all than so much as a quarter of an Hour, or one minute that is to come: We spend our Years as a Tale that is told. For it seems all one then. And so it being evident, that the World is then passed away, and all the things thereof as to us, of consequence, as we know and find this; we must have but little *Regard*, *Thought*, or *Desire* after them. Like as when one is Riding Post, and at full Speed upon the Road, how little doth he mind such a single Tree, or Little Bush that stands by the way-side? for perhaps we just see it as we pass by, but we soon forget, and not think upon it: Even so we are passing through this world. Upon the *Souls Dissolution*, or flight from the Body, the Lightning which moves from East to West, in the twinkling of an Eye, is not quicker in its motion, as appears by the Quickness of Thought now, and by sight, the *Principal Sense* and *Operation* of our Soul.

And

And when she is Launching out into her *Eternal State*, *All the things of this World*, about which we have been busied, and employed so long, will not seem so much, or not much more then a little single mark or token, that stands alone by it self upon a long Road. As we are gathering up our feet in the Bed, in order to yield up the Ghost : How will the Spirit within gather up it self and make towards the *Father of Spirits* ? What would she then give to have Peace towards God, or a God reconciled and in favour with her, and for an assurance, that now she is to be dislodged from this Tabernacle of Clay, she may be received into *Abrahams Bosom*, or that she might say truly, *Into thy hands-I commit my Spirit*, for *thou hast redeemed me*, O Lord God of Truth, Psal. 31. 5. It is not said, *Thou hast made me*, but *thou hast redeemed me*. From which again it appears, they being added by way of necessary and consequent Reason thereof, that there is no commending our Spirits into the Hands of God when we come to dye and to give up the Ghost, without God hath first redeemed us by his truth. From what are we to be redeemed ? Even from that vain Conversation and Corruption that is in the World, through Lust, and from that sin and guilt which is in our Nature. He doth all things *in his own order* ; We must first be Redeemed by God before we can commend our Spirits into the Hands of God.

Now whilst we are in the midst of life and according as the Course of this world stands at this Day, People would reproach such an one to be Melancholy, Mad and Whimsical, if they did hear any one crying out and Expostulating with the Invisible God, in such a Great Earnestness and Anguish of Spirit from the very real sense and bottom of his Soul, as he doth in *Micah 6. 7. Will the Lord be pleased with Thousands of Rams, or with Ten Thousand Rivers of Oyl ? Shall I give my first Born for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul ?* God indeed hath given his first Born for the Sins of Mankind, when *Messiah was cut off, but not for himself*, Dan. 9. 26. God knows the danger of sin, and what wrath is annexed to sin Unpardoned ; Or if an Attonement and Reconciliation, and Agreement be not made for it. But People here in the flesh do not thoroughly know and lay this to

heart ; And therefore it is, that we do not see or hear of any one so very much concerned and affected for Sin, whether it be Pardoned, or whither the Guilt and Evil deserving thereof still remains in them, whilst they be in the midst of Life, Health, Youth and Vigour. But verily, verily, I tell ye before-hand, that when we come to *lie in extremis*, and at the very point of Death, if our senses and understanding ( which is a Great Mercy of God ) is preserved intire, sound and perfect to the last, then this will be the greatest thought and searching of Heart ; Seeing that I and my Naked Soul must now appear before God, stript utterly off from this flesh, and spoiled and bereaved from all the things of this World, which heretofore did stupefie and harden against him, or they did hinder and intercept the sight of his Invisible Majesty, Is this God now, or will He be at Peace, or angry with me ? Shall I hear and receive from him, *Well done Good and Faithful Servant, enter thou into thy Masters Joy, or I know you not, depart from me, thou worker of Iniquity. Go away thou Accursed Creature into Everlasting Punishment, Prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* God hates nothing that he hath made as it is his Creature, till afterwards he sees Sin and Evil in them. Hereupon a Multitude of thoughts doth arise in the Soul, whither my sin be Pardoned and taken away or not. *And why dost thou not Pardone my Transgression and take away mine Iniquity ; for now shall I sleep in the dust,* Job. 7. 21. If the Soul had but once assurance that God would do this for her, then she could with as little fear and concern commit her Body to sleep in the Dust, and then her self could also without Terrour step forth upon the dark Mountains ; as now we do without fear, yea, willingly go to Bed to take our ordinary common sleep each Night, in a Bed of Damask, Violet or Roses ; or as any one ever lay down with Sweetness and Joy in the Marriage-Bed of his most Dearly Beloved. *For as a Young Man Marrieth a Virgin, so shall thy Sons Marry thee : And as the Bridegroom Rejoyceth over a Bride, so shall thy God Rejoyce over thee,* Isa. 62. 5. For then it is upon Death, which is the loosening and dissolution of other Espousals, that the Souls of the Righteous are Married and United unto God. They are gathered up unto the



the Father of Spirits, and stand in his Presence, and near and next unto ; yea, they are one with him (as Husband and Wife make one Flesh) *in whose Presence is fulness of Joy, and at whose Right Hand there are Pleasures for evermore.*

But let no Stranger meddle with this joy ; let not those who are *Aliens to the Commonwealth of Israël*, and not in Covenant with God, ever think to receive or to come in for to share and partake of these Good and Comfortable things : For as before observ'd, there is no commending of our Spirits when we come to dye) into the Hands of God, without having been Redeemed by him from Sin and Guilt, from the vain Conversation and Corruption that is in the World, from Satan and his Temptations. So it is here, in *Micah 6. 6, 7, 8.* Take them all together, there is no Agreement or Peace to be made with the Lord (no, not with those Great, Many and Near Offers and Overtures there mentioned) without following that which is good, and obeying the Requirings of the Lord, *in doing justly, and loving Mercy, and walking Humbly with thy God*, throughout thy past and foregoing Life. There is no other way under Heaven, to get the sin of our Soul pardoned or taken away, or to make Attonement or Expectation for it, but to come into Covenant with God, and not to break it again, but to observe it, according to what is written : *Not according to the Covenant that I made with their Fathers, in the Day that I took them by the Hand, to bring them out of the Land of Egypt, which Covenantnt they brake, although I was an Husband unto them, saith the Lord.* (This confirms the Truth of what was before spoken.) *But this shall be the Covenant that I will make with the House of Israel, After those Days saith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward Parts, and write it in their Hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my People. And they shall teach no more every Man his Neighbour, and every Man his Brother, saying, know ye the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their Iniquity, and will remember their Sin no more, Jer. 34. 31, 32, 33, 34.*



From all this considered together (for a Covenant must be taken all together, as it lies in the whole, and not by Peace-meals) it appears, that the only way for God to forgive our Iniquity, and remember our Sin no more, is to be in covenant with God, to take him for our God. Wherein is supposed, that he is to be our Ruler and Governour, and we his People; which implies Subjection and Obedience, to have his Law in our inward Parts, and written in our Hearts. For what end and purpose is that? Namely, for us to observe, keep and do it. So that the ready and compendious way (there is none besides it) to obtain Forgiveness of Sins, and an Inheritance amongst them that are Sanctified, is by Repentance for the past, and Obedience for the future. There is no other way under Heaven given unto Men, whereby they must be saved: To this do all the Scriptures, both Law and Prophets, Christ and Apostles give witness. If the God of Truth hath Redeemed us, and Delivered us from the Hand of our Enemies, it is, *that we might serve him without Fear, in Holiness and Righteousness before him all the Days of our Life.*

All this Doctrine is pertinent, and direct to our Text; for it was this which gave *Hezekiah* that comfort and rejoicing that did spring up even through his Weeping and Tears, when the Message of Death was brought unto him, that before that, *he had walked before God in Truth, and with a Perfect Heart, and had done that which was good in his Sight.* For there is no Dying in the Lord, without having Lived unto the Lord: There is no dying the Death of the Righteous, without having lived the Life of the Righteous.

It may seem a strange thing, but only it shews forth the exceeding Delusion and Subtilty of Satan, that one may speak many of the Truths of God, and yet not be saved by them himself; that one may Preach unto others, and yet Himself be a Cast-away; and Prophecie in Christ's Name, and yet at the last Day be rejected and disowned by Christ. So *Balaam* could, and did really wish and desire to die the Death of the Righteous: And when he afterwards saith, *Behold, I have received Commandment to Bless, and he hath Blessed, and I cannot reverse it, Numb.*

23. 20. Hereupon his own Reason (for the like Reasoning and Truth runs throughout all the things of God) might have told and acquainted him, that it is impossible to dye the Death of the Righteous, without having lived the Life of the Righteous; for of necessity such an one must have been Righteous before, which doth respect some, yea, and the most considerable part of his foregoing Life, for otherwise such an one could not properly and truly be said to be Righteous; inasmuch as the Denomination is taken from the greater Part. And seeing that the Order, Decree and Purpose of God stands on this wise, *The Righteous hath hope in his Death*, Prov. 14. 32. Such must have been Righteous before their Death; for otherwise the Spirit which always speaks properly and truly, would not have called them *Righteous*. None else have Hope in their Death. Not all the Ministers and People on the Earth, can ever reverse, alter or change this same Order, Decree and Purpose of God. Now here is the strange thing (which rather shews that Satan acted in *Balaam* as to that) that when *Balaam* knew this before, and how desirable indeed it was to dye the Death of the Righteous, yet that he should presently hereupon *love the Wages of Unrighteousness*, which he might conclude would cut him off, and hinder him from the other good and desirable thing. But truly Satan deceiveth not only the Poor and Foolish, but even the more Wise and Learned, and Eloquent of Mankind, for so was this *Balaam*.

And so as *Rabshakeh* could speak in the Person of his Master, for *thus saith the King of Assyria, Make an Agreement with me by a Present, and come out to me*. Isa. 36. 16. So if the Great God of the World should speak on that wise unto the Inhabitants of the Earth, as indeed he doth not, but rather disclaims and disowns, and denies that sort, *If I were Hungry I would not tell thee, for the World is mine, and the fulness thereof: Thinkest thou that I will eat the Flesh of Bulls, or drink the Blood of Goats? Offer unto God Thanksgiving, and pay thy Vows unto the most High*. But suppose that any false or pretended Messengers or Ministers from him, should Preach unto you on this manner; *For thus saith the Lord God, make an Agreement with me*, (so far is no false Doctrine, for Jesus Christ the

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the Truth it self, Preacheth the same to Mankind, *Agree with thine Adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way*. But here comes in the Falshood, and it is falsely applied, *Make an Agreement by a Present*, and that must be *Thousands of Rams, and Ten Thousand Rivers of Oyl*. The cunning corrupt *Romish* Priests, have hence drained a great deal of Tithes and Alms to feed and enrich themselves; for they have fallaciouly Reasoned and Perswaded the People; that what was given unto them this way, was *making a Present unto the Lord*, and consequently an Attonement for their Sins. But all this will not do, for if one should go yet further, and as those who gave up their Children unto *Moloch*, so they would give up their very Children which came out of their very Bowels as Sacrifices to appease God, *their first Born for their Transgression, and the Fruit of their Body, for the Sin of their Soul*. All this is more besides the matter still, for God requires none of these things. What are *Thousands of Rams, and Ten Thousand Rivers of Oyl* unto him, whose is the World, and the fulness thereof? But this is more than all the Sacrifices and Alms in the World, which make so great an outward shew and noise, *to walk humbly with thy God*; that is, to be obedient unto him, for this is the best and most real instance of Humility. And this *walking Humbly with thy God*, denotes a doing so throughout ones Life, even as long as we walk at all.

In truth, if we do thus *walk Humbly with our God*, we have no Reason to fear as concerning *the Sin of our Soul*: For we may let God alone to do as to that, even according to the Words of his Covenant and Truth, (provided always that we be and continue in Covenant with him) *For I will be merciful to their Unrighteousness, and their Sins and Iniquities will I remember no more*, Heb. 8. 12. Most Precious and Comfortable Words, which I had rather in truth to belong unto me, when I lie upon my Death-Bed, or in whatever Hour I am taken, either violently or suddenly out of this World, then to have a Medicine or means found out how I might live not only Fifteen, but if it were Fifteen times Fifteen Years longer; for if God is *merciful unto my Unrighteousness* (which signifies



signifies where I have not come up unto, but have come short of that great Rule of Righteousness in Scripture) and if he remembers my Sins and Iniquities no more, then let Death come upon me, as soon as it will, and what way it will, it cannot possibly hurt me. But this will never be, unless in our foregoing Life, God is our God, and we are to him a People.

There is no way to be Blessed in ones Death, but to be Godly in ones Life. There is no way to have God for our Friend, and to be at Peace with us, when through the Passage or Entry of Death we come to appear before him, but to have lived unto the same invisible God, to have served him with our whole Heart, and to have obeyed him in all things in these days of our Flesh. As we live, so we shall dye: and so again we shall dye, that is, Receive after Death, according as we have lived.

These are Truths of great importance, and necessary to be Understood aright, and done accordingly, that Souls may no longer Shipwrack and be lost upon those deceitful and broken Planks: As if it were then soon enough to serve God thoroughly and constantly, and Universally when they come to be Sick, or in Declining and Old Age, or upon a Dying Bed. God forbid, for this have I found in all my Study out of the Book of Gods Statutes, and in all my enquiring and searching diligently out of the Scriptures of Truth, that such a Man or Woman who thinks so, and will venture and run the risque to Act accordingly, *It were better that a Millstone were tyed about his Neck and that he be thrown into the Sea, for this would only sink him into Temporal Death and Destruction*; But the other deceit if trusted and relied on will involve them into Everlasting Destruction, from the presence of the Lord and the Glory of his Power. Such will never enter into that rest which remaineth for the People of God; Inasmuch as they were never his People, who did not serve and obey him in the most, nor yet in the best part of their life time.

Altho some, yea, too many of that kind of outward worldly Priesthood now among us, (*Who heal the hurt of the Daughter of my People slightly, crying, Peace, Peace, when*

when there is no Peace) Will also huddle up the matter and ter their rate, when People are lying in Fears and Horrors on their Death Bed, and send them out of the world with a vain hope and false thought ; yet even they might have Learned better and more faithful dealing from that afore-mentioned saying of corrupt *Balaam*, (for his fault and failure only was, that he spake well but did ill *Behold I have received Commandment to Bless, and he hath Blessed and I cannot reverse it.* So it is on the other hand where we Ministers have received Commandment to Curse or to speak evil, (*As Cursed are all they that err from his Commandments*) Or where he hath threatned to Punish there God hath Cursed and Threatned, and He will Punish and we cannot reverse it. Not all the Ministers, Preachers, or Understanding People now living on the Earth can reverse, or change from the least Tittle of the Word of God, that it should fail or not be fulfilled.

I heard once a Minister of the Dissenting sort (who commonly are more faithful herein then those of the Church Ministry) say, that several People who had lived Ungodly and Ignorant Lives, would send for him when they lay upon their Death Beds. And if they were of the Substantial and Richer sort, they would perhaps offer him Money if He would speak a word of Peace and Comfort unto them, when lying in those sore and last Agonies of Soul. But it would have been in him a sinful Corruption if he should have Perverted the Word of God and took it for that end as he did not ; but it hath been the manner of some so to do. Said he, however I would go to them, but when I came to them I did not Answer their Expectations, for I used to repeat before such, what is Written in *Isa. 3. 10, 11. Say ye to the Righteous it shall be well with him ; for they shall eat the Fruit of their doings. Wo unto the Wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the Reward of his hands shall be given him.* This Scripture is very pertinent and proper to such an occasion : Herein this Minister (who probably now is a Partaker of the Truth of the former Verse, he being at this time gone off from the Stage of the Earth) shewed himself a Workman approved of God, *Dividing the Word of Truth aright, and giving to every one his Portion.* And indeed, any one that rightly knows

knows and understands the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, doth also find, that the whole Design, Order, Drift and Tendency, of all that is Written in the whole Scripture, stands on this wise, *They that have done Good, shall come forth unto the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done Evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation*, (for his *John 5.29. For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be Good or Bad.* So that only a Godly Righteous and Sober Life, and Good Deeds will avail and stand in stead in a dying Day.

For tho' the common deceit, which each Man hath in the deep of his heart (which also is intimated to them to Preach their own Danger and Loss, by those who take upon them the Office of Preaching Repentance and Remission of sins) that People may turn from their Iniquities some time hereafter, a little before their Death. That they may have the Pleasures of sin for a Season, the expediency of Transgression, the Profit and Wages of unrighteousness in the mean while, and then leave them off just soon enough to obtain Pardon. But certainly, this is quite to leave the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, to go backwards to Imperfection, not laying again but utterly overthrowing, yea, and contradicting the Foundation of Repentance from Dead Works; for these should be utterly forsaken, and Fruits should be brought forth Meet for Repentance. And yet further, this would make void both Law and Gospel; for they require that, *We observe to do his Statutes and Judgments all the Days that we live upon the Earth*, Deut. 12. 1. *That we serve God without fear, in Holiness and Righteousness before him all the Days of our Life*, Luke 1. 74, 75. And however, it shall be distributed unto the other sort as to Acceptation or Pardon, yet surely, I know it shall be better with them that fear God, which fear before him and turned from their Iniquities and kept his Commandments in those Days of their flesh, whilst others continued in Sin and Disobedience. In the latter Days ye shall consider it perfectly, Jer. 23. 20. This Jeremiah said, when he immediately speaks thereupon of those Prophets, *Which Ran and Prophefied, when God had not spoken*

unto nor sent them ; and they did not turn People from their Evil way, and from the Evil of their doings. Whereby may be seen that if this effect doth not follow also, they are no Ministers of Gods ordaining, altho' they do take upon them the office and continue in the Exercise thereof, after the Law and Commandment, the Ordinances and Institutions of Men. But in the latter Days (when their time of Tryal is over) they shall consider it perfectly ; and when they come to see every, and each Man have his own reward proportioned and adjusted according to his works and obedience ; Then that which themselves shall miss and come short off, will raise bitter anguish within themselves and make to loath those Shepherds. (*See Zech. 11.8.*) Which should have Instructed and Guided them otherwise. For this is certain on the right and safer side, that the sooner any one comes to Repentance, and *brings forth Fruits Meet for Repentance and abounds in Good Works* ; God is now the better pleased with that Man or Woman, and He will give to such a more full reward hereafter.

Conceive your selves before-hand, and whilst in Health let us in serious thought throw our selves upon a Dying Bed, just gasping and breathing out our very last ; and then think what Temper and Disposition of Soul we should be in, if we were in this Hour brought to the Gallows, or to the Fire for our Life to be taken off from the Earth in a violent manner. Here it may be either for the Sins of others, as Jesus was hanged on the Cross ; and so it is of all true Martyrs and Sufferers, it is not so much their own Sins, as the Sins of their Persecutors, which put them to Death. But if any one suffers as a Murderer, or Robber, or an Evil Doer, against which, there is some Law of God also, then he suffers for, and dies in his own Sin. Or if one is killed by another, then it is the Sin of the Murderer which brings him unto Death. But however it be, a Dying Hour will come upon all one time or another ; and then if they have any remembrance or understanding, Ask now of the Generations that were before thee, and did you ever hear of any one that could then say seriously and throughly, *It is vain to serve God,*

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and what Profit is it that we have kept his Ordinances, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts? Doth it not then rather seem on the other hand, *It was vain that we have not served God more.* The Godly and Righteous make such a Reflexion and looking back, and the Wicked find it is vain, because they did not serve God at all, or not so much as can be properly called serving of God; for now they experimentally find all other things to be vain. When the end thereof is come, we are then thoroughly sensible of what is written, *Remember how short my Time is, Wherefore hast thou made all Men in vain,* Psal. 89. 47. Therefore only it is that we have no more profit, because we have not yet better kept the Ordinances of the Lord; for the more we do that, the more Profit or future Reward we shall receive; whereof we shall perceive somewhat more, as we come near to the end of our Hope, the Day of Death, which is indeed to the Children and Servants of God, the Birth-Day of Immortality. Therefore only it is, that we have not more Profit, because we did not so much as we should, *walk Mournfully*; but we should have walked yet more closely before the Lord of Hosts. To *walk Mournfully*, is according to the Reproach and manner of Speech of the People of the World; for they imagine and say, as if Religion and the Service of God, was a Melancholly and Irksome thing; whereas if it be True and Universal, Inward and Real, it is the greatest satisfaction and Peace to the Soul of Man, of any thing in this World.

In a Dying Hour, when all things fail and slip from us, God and Religion are the only Resort. *My Soul cleaveth fast unto thee,* saith the Psalmist by the Spirit. But though hardly ever any one in a dying Condition did say, *that it would have been vain for them to have served God*; we have heard of Thousands sad Examples on the other Hand, crying out upon their Death-beds of the Misery and Deceitfulness of Sin, with Anguish, Bitterness and Vexation of Spirit, that ever they themselves should give way unto it, and really and sincerely then wishing, that themselves had lived otherwise. Then they confess and acknowledge, that it was an evil and bitter thing to have forsaken the Lord, and that his Fear was not in them. *And*  
*they*



*they have not cried unto me with their Heart, when they howled upon their Beds,* Hof. 7. 14. That is, upon their Sick and Dying Beds. By the Phrase of *Howling*, the Holy Ghost doth seem to allude unto that kind of Noise which Dogs usually make when they are in Pain and Misery; the Sense or Smart whereof makes them to *Howl*, when they have no Reason or Soul to comfort and mitigate the other. Even so the Sinners and Hypocrites, when they are under violent Pains of Body, or the languishing of Pining Sicknes, and yet much more from that fearful Expectation of those dreadful things of the Invisible World, all this will sometimes make them cry out and howl; and yet at the same time they do not cry out with their Heart to God; for that hath been a long time at enmity and distance from him; and indeed they are ignorant and unacquainted with him.

In a Dying Hour things will appear in a just and real value, and then will be discerned what was best to have been done: *Then shall ye return and discern between the Righteous and the Wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.* In the latter Days ye shall consider it perfectly. It is certain that we must give Account for all, and the several Talents which we have received, as Knowledge, Health, Riches, Time and such like.

Now to instance in this last, which is most proper, because we are here speaking of a Dying Hour: When Time is ended, and shall be no more, which do you think will tend to better Reckoning, when we come to give an Account for so many Days and Hours spent.

Either so many Days or Hours were spent in Hearing, or Reading, or Meditating on the Word of God, *in his Law doth he meditate Day and Night,* Psal. 1. 2.

*Item,* So many Hours in Worship and Prayer.

*Item,* So many Hours expended in good Works, and the Duties of Christianity.

*Item,* So many Hours in Honest Labour in our Trade or Employment, which is a complying with that Prime Ordinance of God, *In the Sweat of thy Face shalt thou eat thy Bread, till thou return unto the Ground,* Gen. 3. 19.

All these will turn to Good and Profitable Accounts, that we may find *Mercy, Comfort and Reward from the Lord in that Day*, 2 Tim. 1. 18.

But then comes in also the Account which some must be forced to make on the other and worse Hand.

*Imprimis*, So many Hours spent in *serving divers Lusts and Pleasures*.

*Item*, So many Hours in Cards and Dice, and in other vain and unnecessary Recreations.

*Item*, So many Hours in Carnal Visits and Company.

*Item*, So many Hours in Pride and Dressing.

*Item*, So many Hours in Stage-Plays.

*Item*, So many Hours in Taverns or Ale-Houses.

*Item*, So many Hours expended in serving of *Mammon*, Covetousness, and getting of unjust Gain.

All these and such like, will tend to Loss and Punishment at that Day.

This Question is easie to be answered, and it will be seen which of these Two will tend most to Mens and Womens Happiness at the Last Day.

Seeing we must all unavoidably give Account for so many Sabbaths as we have had, Will it not tend to better Account to have spent the remaining Hours thereof after the Publick Worship is over, in Hearing the Scriptures, and what Truths do flow from them? (for on the Sabbath-day, besides the *double Burnt Offering*, was to be a *continual Burnt Offering*, Numb. 28. 9, 10. The Holy Ghost thereby signifying, that that Day was to be wholly and thoroughly spent in the immediate worship of God, and Hearing, Reading or Meditating on his Word. Or the very same Time expended in Worldly Company, and therein *speaking their own Words*, contrary to *Isa. 58. 13*. Or in Carnal Perambulation in the Fields. Ay, but here some will be apt to say, *Should not they who are Working, and Trades People all the Week long, have some Delight and Recreation on this Day of Rest?* To which I answer, they should call the Sabbath a Delight, and delight themselves in the Lord, *Isa. 58. 13, 14. And delight to do thy Will, O my God, Psal. 40. 8.* And so to Hear his Will; for if Heaven is not thus begun with them whilst on Earth, as to

*delight in that which is good, it will not be their Portion when they come to die. As Isaac went out to Meditate, (in the Margent there it is to Pray) in the Field at Evening, Gen. 24. 63. So it seems to be no Sin to walk out into the Fields in the Evening of the Sabbath, if it be for Meditation or Prayer, or to discourse together only of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. But it seems to be sinful to spend the Evening of the Sabbath or Lord's Day in Luytering and Idleness, or standing by the Walls, or in the Doors of the Houses, Ezek. 33. 30. when they will not go to hear what is the Word that cometh forth from the Lord, as the same is truly and faithfully alledged from the Bible.*

Some of my Kindred according to the Flesh, have despised me upon the Account of my Preaching in a little Meeting or Assembly of Christians, as if it was mean, little, pitiful and unbecoming that Birth, Education and Family I am off. Good God! what kind of Imaginations do lurk in the Heart of Man! Can any one be too good to serve thee? And is it beneath those of what is called a Genteel Birth and Extraction (which eccho like, is a Voice, and nothing else, for they also are formed out of the Clay) to come down to the plainness and simplicity of thy Worship. As for mine own part, I do abhor such a Thought with the utmost Indignation from the very bottom of my Soul; but I cannot help the Talk, Esteem and Reproach of others.

But lest it should seem somewhat too trivial to mention or rehearse these things, We may read somewhat alike to this, in 2 Sam. 6. 14, 15, 16. *And David danced before the Lord with all his might, and David was girded with linen Ephod. And as the Ark of the Lord came into the City of David, Michal, Saul's Daughter looked through a Window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, and she despised him in her Heart, and came out to meet him, and said, How Glorious was the King of Israel who uncovered himself to Day in the Eyes of the Handmaids of his Servants, as one of the vain Fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself. David was here so far from being discouraged at this sarcastical kind of Saying, that he is more confirmed in his Duty, I will play before the Lord,*

will be more vile then thus, and will be base in mine own Sight, and of the Maid-Servants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour. Even so will I Preach Righteousness in this little Congregation (for that no more are gathered together, that is the Sin and Fault of those who refuse to come; it is their Stubbornness and Disobedience, their Pride and Abomination of Heart.) however Vile or Base I shall be thought of by others for it; knowing and believing that where Two or Three are gathered together in his Name, and in his Fear, there God and Christ will be in the midst of them. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the World, and base things of the World, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, 1 Cor. 1. 27, 28.

All those afore-mentioned Imaginations of Pride, will vanish and disappear utterly, and seem as nothing upon a Death-bed. Which time is hastening upon them, as it hath been already fulfilled as to those of foregoing Generations, as to the Rich and Chief of the People. As a Dream when one awaketh, so O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their Image, Psal. 73. 20. The Lord of Hosts hath purposed it, to stain the Pride of all Glory, and to bring into Contempt all the Honourable of the Earth, Isa. 23. 9. When Pride will profit them nothing, but rather sink them down into the lowermost Hell; and Riches with all their Vaunting will do them no Good.

As Socrates (that real Martyr for the one God, against the vain Polutheism of the Gentiles) told his Judges immediately after they had passed the Sentence of Death upon him, I go away to die, but ye to live a little longer, but which will be the better for us God knows. My Answer is alike to this scornful Reproof of those that are at ease, and the contempt of the Proud concerning this matter: I am resolved (by the Divine Grace) to go on in this manner of way, Reproach it in as pitiful and mean a manner as you will; and ye will continue a little longer in your Contempt of Gods Word and Commandment, in your going on according to the fashion and course of this World, and in the way of the Multitude; but which will be better for us at last, God knows. But the same Word of God, which speaks not one Tittle of Good of this kind of Conversation and manner of Acting, doth make known to me, that



as long as I continue faithful in his Service, and am not weary of well-doing, for in due Season, we shall reap if we faint not: If I fear not the Reproach of Men, nor am afraid of their Revilings: Then the same God who chose David before Michals Father, and before all his House, to appoint him Ruler over Israel, the People of the Lord; he also may choose me to reign in his Kingdom before such Scoffers and Reproachers of me, only for serving God in the Word of his Ministry; and of the Saints and Servants of the Lord, I may be had in Honour, in the day of Eternity, when such like shall be thrust down into shame and everlasting Contempt, and become an hissing to Angels and Men.

In a word, Let People do so in all the several things pertaining to God, as they will wish they had done when they come to be Sick unto Death; or in a dying Day; or as soon as they are let slip into Eternity. Remember this great End, and thou shalt never do amiss.

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# SERMON II.

O N

Isaiah XXXVIII. 2, 3.

*Then Hezekiah turned his Face toward the Wall and Prayed unto the Lord; And said, Remember now O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a Perfect Heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight, and Hezekiah wept sore.*

**T**Here is not a Sentence or Word in Scripture, but what is observable, and somewhat may be gathered from thence: Yea, the very Iota's, Points and Stops thereof, are to be heeded and attended unto; for some meaning and signification may be also drawn and conceived of, according as they are and do stand: And so when we here Read, that *Hezekiah turned his Face towards the Wall, and Prayed unto the Lord*, some Use and Word of Instruction is hereby conveyed and made known unto us, namely, that in our Worship of the Invisibie God, whether it be Publick or Private, we should *turn our Face to the Wall*, that is, as saith the Psalmist, *Turn away mine Eyes from beholding Vanity, and quicken me in thy way*, Psal. 139. 37. This we should do at all Times, and in all Places, but yet more especially in and amidst the Worship of God, we should turn away our Eyes from so much as beholding other Men

and Women; not looking about (as the manner of many is) at every one that comes into the Church or Congregation: Nor yet should we stare about on this side or that side, to observe other Peoples Devotions, to the neglect of our own. Nor yet should we look about what Vestments, Clothes or Apparel such an one, or such an one is in. In a word, we should turn away our Face from all outward and other Objects unto the Wall; which being the same still, and there being no great variety therein, will not distract the Mind, nor yet much divert it from its being more intent and fixed on its proper Object, the *Unseen God*; whom we there come to bow down before, and worship in our Soul. *And this I speak for your own Profit, and that you may attend unto the Lord without Distraction,* 1 Cor. 7. 35. It is the manner of some, to shut their Eyes in Prayer, to hinder and prevent themselves the more from Wandring and Distraction, in looking on outward Objects: But Satan who hinders still, can and also doth fill the Mind with other Thoughts and inward Phantasms, that unless the Mind be more intent upon him that is Invisible, and also upon Invisible things, still it will be distracted. And so it may be on the other Hand, as *Balaam fell into a Trance, but having his Eyes open*; so one may altogether as well pray unto the unseen God with his Eyes open, whom his visible works do yet more put in mind of, especially if we lift up our Eyes to him that dwelleth in the Heavens, altogether as well as when they are shut, provided always that we turn our Face to the Wall; that is, the Eyes of our Understanding inwardly, from Visible to Invisible things.

At the first hearing of that Message, when *Hezekiah* thereupon turned his Face to the Wall, in probability, he thought that then he was to go out of this World; and so he would of his own accord, by turning his Face to the Wall, go out from the World in Thought and Conceit, before his Soul should go out of the Body in deed. Like as when News was told them of the Death of *Lazarus*, then said *Thomas which is called Didymus*, unto his Fellow Disciples, *Let us also go, that we may dye with him.* And so to die and go out of the World in thought, before we dye and go out of the World in deed,

deed, much use and benefit may be made hereof. I wrote  
 unto you an Epistle, not to company with Fornicators of this  
 World, or with the Covetous or Extortioners, or with Idola-  
 ers, for then must ye needs go out of the World. *Isaiah*  
 writeth, that the Multitude of the City shall be forsaken;  
 and *Jeremiah* wisheth for a lodge in the WilderNESS, that he  
 might get out from the Assembly of Treacherous Men. Cer-  
 tain it is, that the more we do sometimes abstract and  
 separate our selves from our Fellow-Creatures, and from  
 all the things of the World, the more and nearer Com-  
 munion we have and enjoy with God. The more we set  
 our Affection on things above, the less we are pressed  
 down with the things of this Earth. *Blessed is the Man*  
*whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee.* But  
 to his same Man whom God chooseth, and causeth to ap-  
 proach unto himself, he is also separate, and doth come  
 out from the things and Men of the VWorld: And truly  
 it is upon a Sick and Dying Bed. However much we  
 kept Company with Men and VWomen our Fellow-Crea-  
 tures, yet then there is an inclination in the Soul to turn  
 away his Face from them; for they cannot help, avail or  
 stand instead in this time of the greatest need and extre-  
 mity. What are all the Men of the World unto us, just  
 at the time when we are Sick unto Death? It is sufficient  
 to have turned unto them when we were in the midst of  
 Life, because we then lived in a Community and Society,  
 and had need of one another: But now it is reasonable,  
 (which indeed we naturally do) to turn from them when  
 we come to die. Nothing of what we have done to  
 please Men, will then avail or stand instead, but what we  
 have done to please God; and truly it were to be wished  
 that we had turned from them sooner.  
 But as *Saul* said unto *Samuel*, Turn again with me; but  
*Samuel* turned about to go away: Which was in dislike. So  
 contrariwise *Hezekiah* upon his Sick Bed, did not turn a-  
 way his Face towards the Wall, out of any dislike to  
 the Death *Isaiah*, for here they were both of a Principle, that is,  
 both Godly, but *Saul* was Ungodly. But *Hezekiah* did  
 thus for another Reason, namely, that he might the bet-  
 ter terminate, direct and offer up his Prayer unto God.  
 But here again it is true, that as it is written, *Unto which*  
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of the Saints wilt thou turn thee? So it is upon a Dying Bed, the bare having the Company of the Saints, or even of the Prophets of the Lord (although they are better Company than others) yet this will not stand the dying person in such stead, unless his own Life hath been Holy before, and unless Himself hath obeyed the Voice of the Word of the Lord, throughout his past foregoing Life, by the mouth of the same Prophets. Another's Goodness, or Holiness, will not extend unto, or save thee: But if ever thou dost expect to see the Lord with comfort, thou must have Goodness and Holiness in thy self also. For every Man shall bear his own Burthen, Gal. 6. 5. The Soul that sinneth, it shall die. The Son shall not bear the Iniquity of the Father, neither shall the Father bear the Iniquity of the Son. The Righteousness of the Righteous shall be upon him, and the Wickedness of the Wicked shall be upon him, Ezek. 18. 20. The Sanctity of Isaiah the Prophet, although he came to Visit Hezekiah on his Sick-bed, would not have benefited Hezekiah so far as to render him meet for Gods Favour and Acceptance, unless Hezekiah also had walked before God in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, and done that which was Good in his sight. Probably King Hezekiah knew this, That neither the Holiness nor Godliness of Isaiah, nor yet of all the People within his Realm and Dominion, would avail as to him, unless Himself also had been Godly and Holy, And so all his Precious Things, and all his Treasures that were in his House, or in his Dominion, would not by any means Redeem his own Soul, nor give to God a Ransom for him: For the Redemption of a Soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever. And it cannot be Redeemed with such corruptible Things as Silver and Gold, nor yet by the Obedience and well-doing of others, except the Righteousness and Obedience of Jesus Christ, by which many shall be justified. Yea, They will be justified by it, who could not be justified by the Righteousness and Obedience of all their other Fellow-Creatures throughout the world: For as by the Offence of One, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation: Even so by the Righteousness of One, the Free Gift came upon all Men to Justification to Life, Rom. 5. 18. And so his Righteousness was imputed to David, Hezekiah, and all the Good Men that were

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were ever living upon the Earth before, or at the very  
 time, or who have been ever since Jesus Christ was mani-  
 fested in the Flesh. But besides that, the Righteousness  
 of all the Subjects that ever *David* or *Hezekiah* had ; And  
 so the Righteousness of all our Fellow-Creatures, which we  
 have ever known, or heard of, will not avail, so as to be  
 imputed to any other. The Knowledge and Sense where-  
 of might make *Hezekiah* to turn unto the Wall, when he had  
 received the Message of Death. And so likewise it will  
 do as to us, when we come to lye in a like condition: We  
 must severally, and every one of us stand upon our own  
 Legs, when we come to stand in the latter days on the  
 Earth, and when every one of us are to receive for the  
 deeds done in the Body. What others have done, what is  
 that to thee? Look to thine own self? for according as thy  
 particular Deeds (and not others) have been, either Good  
 or Evil, thou shalt be particularly recompenced. Then *Ju-*  
*das*, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was Con-  
 demned, Repented himself, and brought again the Fifty Pieces  
 of Silver to the Chief Priests and Elders, saying, I have  
 sinned, in that I have betrayed the Innocent Blood. And they  
 said, What is that to us! see thou to that. This is a fearful  
 consideration against them who commit Sin, or omit Du-  
 ty (which is also Sin) to please other Men. For though  
*Judas* had committed this sin of betraying the Innocent blood  
 to please the Chief Priests and Elders, yet we hence see,  
 That when he came once to be in Extremity of Conscience,  
 and he was drawing near to God to suffer for this his E-  
 vil Deed, what a short, slighting and vexatious kind of  
 Answer did he receive from them; *What is that to us? See*  
*thou to that.* And so it will be as to all the sin that we  
 have committed, or as to the Good which we have omit-  
 ted upon the Account of, and to please others, why this  
 will be the result and consequent thereof as from them,  
 when we come to be punished, and lose so much for the  
 same, in the future distribution of things; if we come to  
 ask for Help, Comfort, or that they should make it up  
 unto us, they will in like manner answer, *What is that to*  
*us? See thou to that.*

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Whereas those who committed Sin or omitted Duty to please others, should herein have made the right Inference ; They should have seen to that sooner, so as not to have done that same thing at the Instigation of, and at the Mind or Pleasure of others. Said the chief Priests and Elders unto *Judas*, What is that to us? When *Judas* did it out of regard and respect unto them, and to fulfil their desire. But herein is shewed forth the very Mind Temper and Disposition of Mankind, they would have such a thing done, but then they would not have the Guilt and Punishment thereof. They would have the Conveniency, Expediency or Pleasure of the sin ; but then they would escape from and avoid the misery which is Consequent and Annexed thereto. *Judas* liked well enough of the Thirty Peices of Silver, but that Repentance and Anguish of mind afterwards, which occasioned him to hang himself, if he could have had the first without the last, this he would have liked well enough. And so the chief Priests and Elders thought it expedient to put Christ to Death ; but thereupon to Contract the deep Dye and Guilt of Murther, to fall thereupon under the Wrath and Displeasure of Almighty God. And what they falsely surmised, that if they had not done it, the *Romans* would have come and taken away their Place and Nation ; but by their doing of it, they took the effectual and ready means to bring them in; for thro' their grievous sin of putting Christ to Death, the *Romans* did at length come and take away their Place and Nation. Which God might have kept and restrained from them, had they not thus grievously offended him in killing his Son ; Whereupon he made good his Word, *As to slay those Wicked Men and let out his Vineyard unto others*, Mark 12. 9. To commit sin, and then to be willing to avoid the Punishment, is to endeavour to put asunder what God hath joyned together, which is impossible: for our Gracious God, in that he might the more deter and keep People from it, hath ordered that misery should be linked on to Iniquity. So that if People commit the one, they must of unavoidable consequent have the other, although in thought and desire they would fain let alone and escape it. The Creature can never be too hard for God ; and where he hath com-

committed sin, or done things worthy of Punishment, he cannot by any Trick or Artifice avoid the severity of his Vengeance.

*Like as Amnon hated his Sister Thamar, after he had committed Incest and Folly with her; And as the Ten Horns which thou sawest shall hate the Whore:* So it is usual for sinners upon their Death Beds to hate their Whores, their Drunken Companions and such like, with whom they have been Partakers in any Sin or Iniquity. For the Guilt thereof doth then more appear forth, and they are going away to receive for their Evil Deeds: The foreknowledge whereof doth raise this Evil Affection of Hatred, Dislike and Antipathy. So that even upon that Account, there is an Actual Inclination upon our Death Bed, to turn away our Face from our Fellow Creatures, who are to survive a little longer.

Moreover a full and through knowledge doth then arise in us, that they are not able then to give us any Actual help or relief, now our Breath is a going forth. *Put not your trust in Princes, nor in the Son of Man, in whom there is no help,* Psal. 146. 3. In the Margent it is salvation, which signifies safety or preservation. Upon a through Knowledge and Consideration hereof it appears, that there is little or no help in them even in the midst of our Life, and yet there is much less in that moment wherein we come to dye. If we have done never so much to please Men, it signifies nothing in the Hour of Death: They are under the same Law and Liableness to Death, and they cannot deliver themselves: So that besides the Evil and Guilt, and Sins of Omission, which they have been Instrumental unto us to Contract; Out of the knowledge, how insufficient and unable they be to Administer any Actual help, we readily and naturally turn away from them, for we must stand, or fall wholly to our selves.

This and such like may be one reason of *Hezekiah turning his Face unto the Wall*; Besides, that thereby he might the more abstract from Men, and be more intent and fixed on the unseen God: For that mind which would pray unto him, should cast off and be clear from the thoughts of all other things, the more to *engage his heart to approach*



proach unto the Lord, which the more it is done, it is much a greater obligation unto the Lord, for to He and Answer such an ones Prayer.

The Prayer of *Hezekiah* unto the Lord, which is here Recorded, doth begin after this manner, *Remember not O Lord, I beseech thee.* As it is Written, *He that teacheth Man Knowledge, shall not He know?* So He that giveth to Man Memory or Remembrance, shall not He Remember? And as it is there again Written, *The Lord knoweth the Thoughts of Man, that they are Vanity.* So the Lord Remembers all the Thoughts, Words and Actions of Man, in order to render unto every one accordingly. *Great in Counsel and Mighty in Work* (for *thine Eyes are open upon all the ways of the Sons of Men, thou give to every one according to his ways, and according to the Fruit of his doings,* Jer. 32. 19. *The Lord looketh from Heaven; He beholdeth all the Sons of Men, from the place of his Habitation. He looketh upon all the Inhabitants of the Earth: He fashioneth their Hearts alike; He considereth all their Works,* Psal. 33. 13, 14, 15. So that his Eyes being upon all the ways of the Sons of Men, and he considering all their Works, he must of Necessity Remember them. *Put thou my Tears into thy Bottle. Are not these things noted in thy Book? Are not Five Sparrow sold for a Farthing? And not one of them is forgotten before God. And so the very Hairs of our Head are all numbered. God knoweth all things,* which shews also, that he remembereth (for Remembrece is a Knowledge and keeping in Mind of past things) all things that have been done on this Earth by all the Creatures and Things therein. *Known unto God are all his Works from the beginning of the World; Ye and they are Registred and set down by him. The Sin of Judah is Written with a Pen of Iron, and Graven with the point of a Diamond,* Altho' no Man did ever speak or take notice thereof. And so seeing that God knows all Things, and Remembers all Things in all Persons and Creatures, What need had therefore *Hezekiah*, or any other of the Saints and Servants of the Lord, to pray unto him in that manner of Speech, *Remember me O Lord, with the favour thou bearest unto thy People,* Psal. 126. 4. *Lord Remember David, and all his Afflictions*

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Whereas God doth and will *Remember*, without being prayed unto for so to do. But as to this the Lord doth speak by *Ezekiel*, that tho' He would do such a thing for *Israel*, yet for all that, He would be enquired of by *Israel* for that thing. And so tho' God will do many things, Nevertheless, yet he would have the Creature pray unto him for it. Both in obedience to his Commandment of Calling on his Name, as also to shew forth that dependance, subjection and desire, which the Creature hath after the same from his Creator.

Herein also his Servants do speak after the manner of Men, when they pray in such a manner; *Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people, Neh. 5. 19. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me, according to the Greatness of thy Mercy. Remember me, O my God for Good, Neh. 13. 22, 31.* And in another place he saith to this purpose, *Wipe not my Good Deeds out of thy sight.*

*Hezekiah* prays, That God would *Remember* the Good Life which he had led. He might have thus known, that there had been no need for him to use those words, *God would have Remembered his Good Life Nevertheless.*

It may be convenient and necessary to keep a Catalogue of our sins, and a Catalogue of Gods Mercies toward us. The first to the intent, that we may confess and be sorry for them, that so God according to his Gracious method and promise may forgive them; That we see and eye continually the Rock whereon we had well nigh split, and more certainly avoid and pass by the same for the future; *That we may bear Iniquity, and lothe our selves in our own sight for them; That all the few and evil Days remaining of our Pilgrimage, we may walk in the Bitterness of our Souls, because we have transgressed against the Lord our God.* Which same will be a Reaping in Joy, in the life that is to come; For according as our present grief for sin hath been, so accordingly will our future Degree of Consolation be.

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And so again, it is convenient and necessary to keep us, a Catalogue of Gods Mercies, that we may be always mindful of them, and endeavour to *render unto the Lord according to the Benefit which we have received*; that we may offer unto him the Sacrifice of Praise continually. *Because he loadeth us with his Benefits daily*; that his great Goodness and Mercy may engage us yet more to close strict and Universal Obedience unto all the Words of his Law; that we may offer him Praise, and Glorifie him, by ordering our Conversation aright, and such like.

But it is neither convenient nor yet necessary, to keep by us any Catalogue at all of our several good Deeds, for God himself will keep a true, faithful and exact Register of them: *For God is not Unrighteous to forget your Work and labour of Love, which you have shewed towards his Name, in that ye have ministered to the Saints, and to the poor*, Heb. 6. 10. Not the least good deed, *even to the Cup of cold Water ministered unto one in the Name of a Disciple of Christ*, Mat. 10. 42. shall be forgotten, nor your pains unrewarded before God.

But as he remembers all our good Deeds, from the greatest of them to the least of them, to recompence every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings; *for thou Lord, only knowest all that is in the hearts of all the Children of Men*) so he remembers all our Sins and Evil Deeds, from the greatest to the least of them. *Thou hast set our Iniquities before thee, and our secret Sins in the Light of thy Countenance*, Psal. 90. *For God shall bring every Work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or bad*, Eccles. 12. 14. In order to do which, he must of necessity remember each one, and every one of both sorts, which again is as certain as that he knows all things; for he keeps and continues them in Knowledge, which is Memory or Remembrance.

*Remember O Lord, how I have walked before thee*; They should more especially remember, and be put in mind of, who live without God in the World, or who have not that constant Sense of the Invisible God upon their Souls and Spirits as they ought to have. Although they do forget God, and not think of him, yet still a

y to keep their Workings, Motions and goings are before him.  
 ay be alwa Mans goings are of the Lord, How then can a Man un-  
 unto the Lo derstand his own way? Prov. 20. 20. Tho' we do not see  
 d; that God, yet he seeth us; but then indeed we should have  
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 hat his gre which should engage us to exceeding Cautiousness and  
 ore to clost Circumspection in all Godly, Righteous and Sober liv-  
 Vords of ing. *For he hath looked down from the height of his*  
 rifie him, *sanctuary, from Heaven did the Lord behold the Earth,*  
 ke. *Psal. 102. 19.* Even so we should with the Eye of  
 ary, to kee Faith, and with the Eyes of our understanding being  
 ood Deeds enlightened, Eye him continually as he sits above on  
 d exact Re his Throne, in the High and Lofly Place, the Inhabi-  
 o forget you tation of Eternity. *Unto thee, lift I up mine Eyes, O*  
 owed toward thou that dwellest in the Heavens. *Behold, as the Eyes*  
 nts, and of *Servants look unto the hand of their Masters, and as*  
 d, even to the Eyes of a Maiden unto the hand of her Mistress:  
 ne of a D So our Eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that  
 en, nor y He have mercy upon us. And so it is elsewhere writ-  
 , from th ten in like manner, *At that Day shall a Man look un-*  
 ompence to to his Maker, and his Eyes shall have respect unto the  
 ding to the holy one of Israel. *And the Eyes of all Israel, as of one*  
 est all that Man shall be towards the Lord; As God Eyeth us,  
 remembe even so we should Eye God. But how can this be,  
 to the lea seeing that God is invifible? It must be done by  
 ee, and on Faith. *Which being the evidence of things not seen,*  
*Psal. 90.* and makes them as if they were seen. After the Fruits  
 and Effects thereof are reckoned up, in *Heb. 11.* It is  
 with ever said in an observable manner of *Moses, By faith He*  
 12. 14. *forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the King; for He*  
 ember each endured as seeing him that is Invifible. This is a con-  
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 yet still Souls which are Invifible, we may see, or at least un-  
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Eye doth see things visible. As all things are naked and opened unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do, *Hell and Destruction are before the Lord how much more then the Hearts of the Children of Men* Prov. 15. 11. So all People, both Godly and Ungodly, Righteous and Wicked, Saint and Sinner, they do all walk in the sight and presence of the Invisible God. With this difference, The Godly, Righteous and Saints do walk as in the sight and presence of the Invisible God. That is, they have a knowledge and sense thereof; and they do thus and thus, with an Intention and Thought at the very time, that God seeth them and is present. But the Ungodly and Wicked, and Sinners do walk only (leaving out the Particle as) in the sight and presence of the Invisible God, *For Hell is Naked before him, and Destruction hath no covering.* God seeth all things, He filleth Heaven and Earth, all things and all places with his presence. So that of necessity, they must be in his sight and presence if they are any where; but these do not walk as in his presence and in his sight. So it is in that sense also. All People of both sorts, Good and Bad walk before God, that is, they are in his sight and knowledge. But only the good so walk before him, as in his obedience and well-pleasing to get his favour and acceptation.

The Generality of People, do not walk before God as *Hezekiah* did, but they live at Random, and all one as if there was no God to see their doings, and as if He would not Judge them, and they were to give no future Account for the same. God both Sees and Remembers where the least Portion of our Precious Time is not spent in his Service and Obedience, but it is Consumed and done away in Lying or Idleness, in Sinful or Vain Things. I my self have too much to Answer for in this Nature. And so, God sees and Remembers where we do not live up to that Grace and Knowledge He had Given and Intrusted us withall: And so he Remembers also where we are not so Good and Holy as we might have been: And also where we have not Improved our Christian Graces and Talents as we might have done. When God comes to enter into Judgment, He will shew him-

are naked himself to be a Remembring God. *These things hast thou done and I kept silence ; Thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thy self, ( as if such and such things were over and forgotten ; In no wise ) but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine Eyes, Psal. 50. 21.* Things will then appear vastly different over what they do now. *For now Fools make a mock at sin ;* They follow it with Greediness and Merriment, and account it as a thing of naught, as to the doing them any harm. But then they will find, that this which was formerly so light in their Opinion, will sink them down to the lowermost Hell. That it will be as a *Talent of lead, which is Wickedness ;* Which will press down the Souls of those that are Loaded and Encompassed therewith into the lowermost parts of the Earth, the Land of Darkness and of the shadow of Death, where no Light is of Comfort or Freedom from misery.

*Happy is He that hath the God of Jacob for his help, and whose hope is in the Lord his God.* Happy is He, that can make his appeal and sweet Recollection with our Saint in the Text, *Remember now O Lord I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in Truth.* Such a review will be comfortable ; but it will not be altogether so, to have it then said unto them, *Son, Remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy Good things,* Luke 16. 15. For this will be but so much the more Torment, when they are slipped and passed away finally and eternally, and they are in that place where they *want a drop of Water to Cool their Tongue.*

Even we know Experimentally by our selves, that when we are now in any Pain or Misery, the Remembrance of what Pleasures of Life we have formerly had, or what good things we have heretofore enjoyed, will not administer one Drachm of present comfort ; Nay, contrariwise, It is an Enhancement of the present misery. *How much she hath Glorified her self and lived Deliciously, so much Torment and Sorrow give her,* Rev. 18. 7. So it will be meted out, Adjusted and Proportioned in the future State of the Restitution and Distribution of all things. How much Pleasure any one hath had here on Earth, the less He will have after he is removed and gone off from it, yea, *There will be so much Torment and Sorrow given to the Person that had it.*

This is an unanswerable Argument and Terrible consideration against *Living in Pleasure on the Earth, or being wanton therein, or Nourishing their Hearts as in the Day of Slaughter.* And it should make us to equally fear to enjoy Pleasure, however Agreeable or Grateful it may now seem to Flesh and Blood, as we would be to take a Snake or Adder into our Bosom ; for altho it may seem smooth or tickle, yet at the last it may sting us unto Death. Or, as we would be to suck in the *Cruel Venim of Asps.* For so stands the Case with Poor Mankind, that their *Wine is mingled with Gall,* and the *Clusters* out of which it is made are *bitter.* For so it stands in the Order and Connexion of things, as they are decreed and appointed by God, *That for faring sumptuously every Day,* they must come to the place after these Days of their Flesh are ended where they shall be *Tormented* ; for so much Pleasures of Life and Delicacies they have had here, after Death they must have so much Torment and Sorrow.

This again is a most clear and convincing Demonstration, *That the living in the Pleasures of sin for a Season,* or the Catching after and enjoying the Delicacies and Recreations of the World, is not a walking before God in Truth, for the end of any ones living in Pleasure or Delicacy, is in order to be an Happy Men. But now it is impossible from the order of the things of God, that either the *Pleasures of sin for a Season,* or the transitory delights of the World, should give unto any Man the true Happiness, because they have such bitter and miserable consequents, no more then a Cup of sweet Poyson, can tend to the well Being and Health of the Body. So that it must follow by necessary consequence, that whosoever follows after the Pleasures of sin for a Season, or the delights of the World, altho he now *Bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have Peace, tho' I walk in the Imagination of mine Heart, to add Drunkenness to Thirst,* Deut. 29. 19. Altho' they hug themselves in their own Conceit, *I shall have Happiness,* because that I enjoy so many Pleasures and Delights in Order to it ; Yet still herein they do not walk before God in Truth. For they do not go in the right Road to Happiness, but they are mistaken and deceived in heart, and they are in a false Path, as the end will prove ;

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for it will at last let them down into the Chambers of Death, the place of Punishment and Misery.

We may thus know and conclude, that as God gave us a Being at first, so it is Natural and Reasonable to expect only from him an happy Being. *My Soul wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him*, Psal. 62. 5. And thereupon we should walk before him in expectation, and seeking after it. And here if we go the right way (*And He led them forth by the right way*, Psal. 107. 7. There is a great deal in that) which is Chalked and Pointed out, Butted and Bounded in his written word, as long as we make that our Guide and Rule, then indeed we walk before God in Truth. But as sure as that word is Truth, *Thy Word is Truth*, the Pleasures of sin for a Season, (how- ever eagerly they are sought after and followed by the People of the world; for Satan who deceiveth the whole world makes use of this as the great Bait to beguile and catch Souls unto himself) are not the true way to Happi- ness and Blessedness in the End. *Because that which may be known of God is manifested in them, for God hath shewed it unto them*, Rom. 1. 19. So in like manner it may be tru- ly reasoned, that which may be known of God, touching his future distribution of things is already manifest in Men, for God hath shewed it unto them. And accordingly may be observed, that Melancholly and Heaviness of heart (in the midst of Laughter the heart is sorrowful) which is im- mediately at, or after having the Pleasures of this Life. That Regret of Mind and Vexation of Spirit immediately ensuing upon the Pleasures of sin for a Season: All this and the like, is but a manifestation before hand, or as a Pledge, Earnest and Forerunner, whereby God hath shewn unto them that *Tribulation and Anguish, Indignati- on and Wrath, which shall be upon every Soul that doth Evil*. This and the like is a fore-shewing of Pain, Punishment and Misery to come. And so again it is on the other good hand, Where is Approbation of Mind, the satisfaction of a good Conscience, a Joyful Hope and Comfortable Ex- pectation, as all these and the like are annexed to our having our Evil things here, to our enduring labour and taking Pains in the Obedience and Service of God, this is an earnest of the Spirit and a Manifestation in Men, whereby



God hath shewn unto them that *Glory, Honour and Peace,* which shall be to every Man that worketh good, Rom. 2. 10. And that assured future blessedness, which shall be to every one that hath lived and done according to the Will of God.

*Thou therefore endure Hardship as a Good Souldier of Jesus Christ,* saith Paul to Timothy. VWhich is a Lesson of Instruction to be put in Practice by all faithful Christians, for as we are in the way of Duty and Service of God, the more denial of our selves we have used as to present ease and safety, the greater satisfaction and enjoyment we shall have hereafter ; whereof now we have a little glimpse, earnest assurance and foretast by that Complacency of mind and lively hope, we may sometimes perceive after such and such Acts of Duty. Notwithstanding, the same do expose us to present worldly Inconveniencies, Loss and Trouble. However we are contented and satisfied, and Joyful ; for it is something for God. And so the more Labour we have been at, the more Rest we shall have hereafter ; and this same Rest will be found yet so much the more pleasant. *And He saw the Land that it was good, and Rest that it was Pleasant,* Gen. 49. 15. Which will be yet more so, as we may perceive by the Irksomeness of its contrary, that is, Restlessness. And so the more Tribulation we have gone through in the world, the Greater will be our Recompence and Crown ; The more loss hath been sustained in his Service, the greater gain will be hereafter ; as *Lazarus* was comforted for the Evil things he had in his life time. Yea, in whatever seems Evil, Harsh, Uncouth and Irksome, it will be made up double, yea, more then an hundred fold in the time of the Restitution of all things, *When the times of Refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.* So that in each thing we take in hand, we should not so much regard whither the same be Pleasant or aukward, but whither it be Duty or Sin, whither it be Good or Evil, whither it will tend to our Benefit or Loss, our Reward or Punishment in the last Day. And so we should either do, or not do the same, either abstain from, or give way unto it.

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Hereby also we may somewhat conceive of the exceeding Evil, Mischief and Danger of Loytering or Idleness. For only Just to Rest or Breath a little, and so to Labour or Business again : Otherwise there can no Good come possibly of it. Nay, it tends to so much Loss to be sustained throughout all Eternity. And it is a *Losing so much of the Things which we have wrought, that they receive not a full Reward*, according as may be apprehended from. 2. John. 8. Which though there is not much Account made of through Ignorance or Unbelief at present, yet *in the latter Days ye shall consider it perfectly*. And when we come to see every Mans Reward Proportioned and adjusted according as his Labour and Work hath been, then what themselves shall miss and be disappointed of through Idleness and Sloth in the Days of their Flesh, will raise bitter Anguish and Indignation within themselves for not having been stedfast, Unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord ; for they were then foretold, but now they will see that their Labour would not have been in Vain in the Lord. If they did somewhat Work and Labour therein, yet still they will have Indignation and Anguish that they did not Work and Labour therein yet more and more. As it is supposed, that the Pain of Loss will be More Grievous, Irksome and Intolerable than the Pain of sence. So likewise this part of the Pain of Loss will be sufficiently afflicting and disquieting to the Soul, that she will then wish that she had not in the least Given way unto Idleness. But she should have looked upon it as One of those Devices of Satan, the Enemy, to deprive and hinder her of so much Good in the Future Recompence. As to this the Rule should be as to all the other Devices of Satan, Not to Give way unto them, and not to suffer our selves to be kept off or hindered by them.

It is an admiration to me, that any one should not know what to do with their Time, seeing that each and every one hath a God to serve and a Soul to save, and surely all Portions and Intervals of Time which can be spared and deducted from other Things of Life, should be employed to this Great End ; as indeed All Things whatever we have to do, should be brought in subordination and tendency to it. We have still corruptions to subdue

Hereby

and Conquer ; and we are to perfect and fill up what is wanting : Nay, still we might forecast and Think of something in order to Work out Our own Salvation ; and this being the Business for which we come only and Principally into this World, we might herein hearken and deceed according to those Gospel precepts, *Not Slothfull in Business, fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord. Giving all Diligence to make our calling and Election sure.*

We should do well and wisely, To exercise the Remembling and Understanding Office of our Souls : for they are made by God our Creator, capable to do both. The Remembling part is chiefly conversant about Things that are past, which by Remembrance are made as it were present unto us. And here ye should call to Remembrance the former Dayes, in the which after ye were illuminated ye endured a Great fight of Afflictions, Heb. 10. 32. Ye may call to Remembrance the former Dayes whilst ye did live in Vanity, Ungodliness and in your Unregenerate state. That ye may see the Rock whereon ye had well nigh split and been Shipwrecked ; and so more carefully and certainly avoid the same for the Time to come. That ye may thoroughly Understand and be deeply convinced of the folly and Danger thereof, and so be more confirmed in mind against them for the Time to come. So it is of Use and Benefit to call to mind the Dayes when we were first illuminated and converted unto the wayes of God ; That we may still keep up our former Zeal and Love towards God, and the *Sounding of the Bowels*, and that earnest desire to please him. Remember both the Good and Evil of your past life, in order to do the one more, and to more eschew the other.

But the Benefit would be yet much greater, to exercise the understanding Office of our Souls, as it reaches unto things to come, which makes them in a manner present unto us. Here in the first place, the Contrivance and Workmanship of our Souls is to be admired at, that they are made as Angels of God, capable not only to chosse the Good and avoid the Evil, but also to see and know things to come and a-far off. Seeing that the Soul is made with such a capacity and faculty, It should be accordingly exercised and used for God made it so for this End

up what End and Purpose. And if we did know before what would  
 Think come hereafter, we should never do amiss ; which especia-  
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 sh as now they do. *My People are Destroyed for lack of*  
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 Souls : for *eternal Destruction* spoken of in the Gospel *from the pre-*  
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 whilst ye the very same as pertaining to invisible and future  
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 efully and the great Necessity and Usefulness whereof hence appears,  
 That ye that it is so often said in the Gospel of Truth, That  
 vanced of *faith saves us ;* intimating thereby, That if we did but  
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 s of God ; to all Eternity.

Love to- My beloved Brethren, it would be of incredible profit  
 that ear d advantage to each of us, to sometimes, yea often step  
 Good and own into the Chambers of Death, and take a Prospect of  
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 a manner *of God,* Psal. 50. 23,) and to be such manner of persons,  
 ntrivance *all holy Conversation and Godliness,* during the few remain-  
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It is the manner of Beasts to think of, and be conversant only about present things, which are Just before them; but to remember what is past, and to apprehend what is to come, This is only what Reasonable Creatures can do, and what Men and Women may do: Unless by their own want of wisdom, sloth and ignorance, it is fulfilled on them what is written; *Nevertheless Man being in Honour, abideth not: is like the Beasts that Perish*, Plal. 49. 12. But I will now add yet further, It is like unto the Immortal and All-knowing God to Remember the past and to apprehend the future, yea, it is an Image of his own Eternity for it doth resemble even God, *Who quickeneth the Dead and calleth the things that be not, as tho' they were*, Rom. 17. For both past and future things are present unto the High and Lofly one who inhabiteth Eternity. Which Eternity one defines to be, a Perpetual now. Even the hairs of our head are all Numbred, and not any thing is forgotten before God: And as we Remember each thing of our past Lives, both the Good and the Evil, to more the one and yet more eschew the other, we do thereby come nearer to his similitude and likeness: And so we do again, as we cast an Eye forward upon the things that are to come; Hereby we make the things that as yet be not to be as tho' they were, for shortly they will come to pass; and it is but a little time, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

*Talk no more exceeding Proud, let not Arrogancy come out of your mouth, for the Lord is a God of Knowledge, and by him Actions are weighed.* And so the Lord is a God of Remembrance, and a God of Prescience and by him Actions are weighed. And seeing that Actions are weighed by him, our Actions ought to be weighed by us also, the Ballance of the sanctuary and of his word, so that they may not be found wanting.

# SERMON III.

O N

Isaiah XXXVIII. 2, 3.

*When Hezekiah turned his Face toward the Wall and Prayed unto the Lord; And said, Remember now O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a Perfect Heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight, and Hezekiah wept sore.*

Come now to shew, and discourse,

1. What it is to walk before God in Truth.
2. With a perfect heart.
3. What it is to do that which is good in his sight.

And then of the Consequent upon the whole; And Hezekiah wept sore.

As to the first, Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in Truth.

We Read in sundry places of Scripture of this Thing, Truth. But from these words, this Doctrine will presently appear,

**S E** That it is the Duty of all who call themselves Servants of the Lord, to walk before the Lord in Truth throughout the whole course of their Life.

So

So did *Hezekiah*, not for a Season, or at such a Time only, but throughout the general Course, Bent and Honour of his Days; Even as long, or for the most part he walked at all, he walked before the Lord in Truth.

Now the Scripture mentioning this Word *Truth* so often, and in all places it doth recommend the same, Exhorts us to the Receiving and Practice thereof: as also finds fault, and Reproves where it is wanting, or where the *Truth is not obeyed*, Gal. 3. 1. Or People do not according to the *Truth*. We may hereby see and understand, that exceeding great Stress and Necessity is hereon, in order to our Eternal Salvation and Happiness. *Open ye the Gates, that the Righteous Nation, which keepeth the Truth* (in the Margin it is *Truths*) *may enter into the City* Isa. 26. 2. That is, Enter into that strong City mentioned in the foregoing Verse, which the Lord hath builded and prepared for such of the Inhabitants of the Earth as he shall judge and find worthy. And here the word Promise, and the Condition annexed, is, That it must be to the *Righteous Nation that keepeth the Truth*, or *Truths*. Which word *Keepeth*, denotes a constant heed, adherence unto, and Observance thereof. And not to change with the wind, or to turn with the Fashion, multitude and Course of this corrupt world; as to say one thing is Truth to day, and another contrary unto, or different from it, is Truth at another time. No such matter; for *his Truth endureth to all Generations*, Psal. 103. 17. Like God, its Author, with the Truth there is no *variableness, nor shadow of Turning*. And like unto Jesus Christ, who is *the Way, the Truth and the Life*; it is the same yesterday, to day and for ever: So that this manifiest them to be *Children that are corrupters, they have forsaken the Lord*, Isa. 1. 4. That they have Prevaricated, turned aside from his Truth; *They are gone away backward*, who speak thus and thus concerning it, as the manner of many is in these our Days. And that they are not the Righteous Nation, or the Righteous People, which keep the Truth, to whom this Precious Promise is made for such kept it, or rather did by Chance happen light thereon for a Time, but they did not keep it continually (*Blessed are they that keep Judgment, and he* of

Such a *Truth* Righteousness at all times, Psal. 106. 3.) and so they  
 ent- and we no Lot, and Share, nor Right to enter into that  
 most part of the City which the Lord hath made for *Judah* and  
 in Truth, *Jerusalem*, yea, for all the Inhabitants of the Earth, who  
*Truth* so would keep the Truth, or walk before him in Truth.  
 he same, For this Good and Sweet Word of Promise is made  
 of : as all not only to the Righteous Nation, but to every and each  
 ing, or particular Soul therein, that keepeth the Truth. So that  
 le do not these Two Consequences must necessarily arise, That even  
 e and un the Unrighteous Nation, which Keepeth not the Truth,  
 cessity is it those few Inhabitants and Souls therein, who are  
 nd Happy ighteous, and do Keep the Truth, shall enter into the  
 y, which City of our God. Again, Suppose it were a Righteous  
 may enter ation, and did Keep the Truth, here the Denominati-  
 City menti is taken from the greater part, and it is called a Righ-  
 hath built us Nation, where the Multitude, or most are so: But  
 the Earth some few therein were Unrighteous, and did not Keep  
 e the word e Truth, here the Promise would be only to the for-  
 hat it must er sort, and not to the latter. The Reason whereof is  
 th, or Tru dent, Because the Soul that sinneth, it shall die : The  
 eed, adhere shall not bear the Iniquity of the Father, neither shall  
 to chop Father bear the Iniquity of the Son ; the Righteousness  
 Fashion, the Righteous shall be upon him, and the Wickedness of  
 as to say Wicked shall be upon him, Ezek. 18. 20. So that as  
 y unto, or being an Inhabitant of a Righteous Nation, which keep-  
 No such the Truth, will not give thee Admission, or Entrance in-  
 s, Psal. 10 the City of God, unless thou be Righteous, and keepest the  
 re is no Truth thy self. So although thou Livest in an Unrighte-  
 e unto a Nation, (where most are so) which Keepeth not the  
 Life ; it is Truth, yet if thou art Righteous thy self, and Keepest  
 this man's Truth, yet thou wilt enter into the City of God, al-  
 y have forough never so few are besides. The Marginal Reading  
 varicated, Truths in the Plural Number, shews ; That it is not the  
 one away the Keeping of One, or Some of the Truths of God, but  
 it, as the m Keeping all of them, which is requisite and necessary,  
 that they we enter therein. It was the same Spirit of God  
 us People, which spake that in *Isaiah* 26. 2. as also which spake that  
 omite is *Isaiah* 38. 3. and which probably gave *Hezekiah* that  
 nce happenowledge, How necessary was Keeping the Truth, or the  
 t keep italking before God in Truth, in order to enter into the Ci-  
 nt, and be of our God, And therefore it was, that just at the  
 Time



Time he was to be removed out of the City of *Jerusalem*, by Death; and he then would fain be removed up into the Heavenly City: Therefore he addresse himself to God in the first Place, *Remember how I have walked before thee in Truth.* For in very deed, as such a Path, way or Road leads to such a Place, so the Truth leads to Heaven.

According as we may further Gather from what is elsewhere written, *Lord, Who shall abide in thy Tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy Holy Hill? He that walketh uprightly, and Worketh Righteousness and speaketh the Truth in his heart.* Psal. 15. 1. 2. So that whatever Truth is in our heart (Provided it be the Truth of God and arising out of his Word) It ought to be spoken forth. Yea the Plain and Simple Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth. For although there is a common saying abroad in the World (agreeable to the Wisdom of the Flesh, which is for Sloth, ease and Present safety) that all Truth is not to be spoken; yet as sure as the Spirit of God in the Scripture last Quoted doth teach the way of Heaven, and lay down the foregoing Qualifications and Conditions, which we must have and do before we come there, whatever Divine and serious Truth is in our heart We must and ought to speak it, come what will thereof, if we do not intend to be Disappointed of Heaven at the last. And if this doing should bring Trouble or suffering on our loins (for this Objection the Wordly Wise Man hath against this Duty; and therefore he will refrain to utter it) VVe must do it nevertheless, This being that manifold kind of Tribulation which we must go through, before we enter into the Kingdom of God.

Take another Scripture, how that the Truth ought not to be hid, but it is to be spoken out. *I have not hid thy Righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy Faithfulness and thy Salvation; I have not concealed thy Loving Kindness and thy Truth from the Great Congregation.* Psal. 40. 10. So that to speak constantly the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth; and this not for a Day or two, or for a Week, Month or Year, but throughout our whole Life, is pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who would have

men to be saved, and to come to the Knowledge of the Truth.

Notwithstanding all the Arts of Dissimulation, Deceit, Secresie, Evasion, Equivocation, or such like, by which Satan's Kingdom stands : (all which are contrary to Simplicity and Godly Sincerity) I have observed in my Experience, That to confess, and speak out the Truth of the matter in most instances, Things have then succeeded more prosperously with me, than when I have done otherwise. And the Truth hath gained and been esteemed of more than all the Little Arts of Falshood. *Honesty is the best Policy*; and it is best to Live within the streight Lines of Duty, and never to transgress at any time : So it may be affirmed in all cases, It is the best way to speak the Truth, whatever will be the Consequent thereof.

We may Read what a great Value and Estimation God himself puts upon it, *Run ye to and fro through the Streets of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the Broad Places thereof, if ye can find a Man; if there be any that executeth Judgment, that seeketh the Truth, and will pardon it, Jer. 5. 1.* By which last is imported, as if seeking the Truth, would almost make atonement and expiation for other sins. His Spirit goes on to add, *O Lord, Are not thine Eyes upon the Truth?* Verse 3. Even the Eyes of Complacency, Delight and Approbation therein.

The Time would fail me to mention all those several places of Scripture, wherein the word *Truth* is spoken of. But in every one of them, it may be observed, that very Excellent and Glorious Things are spoken concerning the *Truth*; and the Drift and Design thereof is to exhort the Inhabitants of the Earth to think, speak and do according unto it at all Times; Even that they may keep the Truth, speak the Truth in their heart, and walk before God in Truth.

There hath been a Proverbial saying, as if *Thoughts* were free. Every one might think what he would in the deep of his heart. But such people do not Know, rather, they do not consider, That they are to be judged by the word of God, which is a discernor of the

the Thoughts, and Intents of the Heart. Neither is there any Creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do, Heb. 4. 13. But too many in our days have improved this a little further ; as if Talk and common Discourse was free, and there was no account to be made, or given of it hereafter. For how many Lies and Falshoods are now uttered forth in common Conversation? VVhether it be in talking of News, or publick affairs, According to the side they rank themselves on, they do not much Regard whither the Thing be true or false, which they Utter forth to Uindicate one side, and run down or slander the other. And so it is in reference to Common Neighbours, Prejudice seldom or never speaks well, If it be concerning any Person against whom they have an Enmity, Hatred or Grudge : They do not refuse to speak Evil fallly of him, or to utter Reproaches and Revilings against him. As saith the Wiseman, *In the Multitude of Words there wants not sin*, so in the Word and talk of this Nature there is a Multitude of sin committed. Herein is found true, *And the Tongue is a Fire, a World of Iniquity : So is the Tongue amongst our Members ; that it defileth the whole Body, and setteth on Fire the course of Nature, and it is set on Fire of Hell*, Jam. 3. Although the Common talkers of the World do not much Regard this, yet whoso truly fears God, He dares not speak one false Word of another, although it be of his greatest Enemy he hath in the World. For he knows that speaking fallly of any one would not be a walking before God in Truth ; and therefore he refrains from speaking Evil fallly of any Man. *So speak ye and so do, as that must be Judged by the Law of Liberty*. James 2. 12.

There are other Instances of walking before God in Truth, as in the Worship of God. And here we are to see well to it that our Worship be in Spirit and in Truth. *But the hour cometh and now is, when the true Worshipers shall Worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth. For the Father seeketh such to Worship him. God is a Spirit, they that Worship him, must Worship him in Spirit and in Truth*. John. 4. 23, 24. Notwithstanding all controversies, Disputes and different Congregations which are now

in this Nation and throughout Christendom; yet as to this the Rule is safe, herein to do as *Moses* did, who was admonished of God when he was about to make the *Tabernacle*. For see (saith he) that thou make all Things according to the Pattern shewed to thee in the Mount. Heb. 8. 5. And now that the Old Dispensation is abolished we are to see that we Order all Things in our Worship according to the Pattern shewed to us in the Gospel. That we may in our Worship (which is a great thing relating unto that God with whom we have to do) walk before God in Truth.

I do believe and speak after my Judgment, that there is not a way of Worship now in this Nation, nor yet on the Earth, which is exactly according to the Scriptures of Truth in all things, and in all things according to the Pattern shewed in the Gospel. And I suppose it will be so seen at the Day of Judgment, wherein it will be Found and Rehearsed, *That all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God*, Rom. 3. 23. So the several Churches and Congregations, the several Saints and Servants of God have somewhat erred and come short of the Spirituality and Truth of his worship, as it was in the Mind and Ordaining of God, and as might be apprehended from out of his Book, for it may be observed now a-days, that in each Sect or Party (however they are Nicknamed, Distinguished, or Termed) there is something which is good and true, and again, there is somewhat which is Erroneous and Savours of Men.

Now as to all this, the faithful and knowing Soul, as she Soars up above all the Ordinances of Religion, as they are managed now a-days by the *Worldly Priesthood*, they seeming to her cold, dull, low and flat, and she apprehends somewhat above them, and is for higher and more excellent attainments: So the same knowing and faithful Soul is vexed and dissatisfied; That she knows not where on this Earth, the People do worship God in all things exactly according to the mind of the Spirit; Nor where her self may turn to the People of a *Pure Language*, that they may Call upon the Name of the Lord with one Consent, Zeph. 3. 9. And she doth thirst and desire earnestly, that she might once Worship the Lord God her Invisible Crea-



our so in the Congregations of his People, as they were in the Days of Old. But where are they so now? And she hath great Thought and Earnestness of Heart, when that time will again come; when it shall be fulfilled what is Written, *Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the Days of Old and in former Years*, Mal. 3. 4. Tho' here again it is to be thought, that as long as we are on this dark and corrupt Earth, we shall never come to worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth (still we ought to endeavour and to do the best that ever we can) till we come to fall down on our Faces before him in Heaven, the Habitation of his Holiness, where we shall see all things in the light of the Lord.

What will satisfy this perplexity and doubt, and desire of Soul as to this great thing in the mean while, should be to this Effect and Purport, As the Lord saith unto the Inhabitants of the Earth, *Eschew Evil and do Good* 1 Pet. 3. 10, 1. So let him, or they that love salvation and would go to Heaven, be sure to do this as much as ever they can, Avoid error and receive and follow the truth in all the several instances thereof. As God himself speaketh on this wise, *If thou shalt learn to separate the Precious from the Vile, and to put a difference between the Holy and Profane, then shalt thou be meet to come unto my Altar*. So here it may be reasoned and applied, if thou knowest and also shalt carefully and constantly do the same, to take out the truth from that Multiplicity of Error which is abroad in the world, like as is the gathering of Gold or Silver from out of the Dross, or Honey from the Wax; If thou knowest to put a difference between truth and falsehood, so as to gather and receive the first into thy heart, and cast away and not admit the other sort, then thou shalt be meet for to come with Acceptance on the Altar of the Lord, Thou shalt enter into his City, the Holy of Holies, the highest Heavens, near to his presence and to his own Divine Majesty. Be sure to observe this Rule in the worship of God, Eschew falsehood and error therein, and receive and do according to the truth, according to the very best of thy Knowledge and Understanding, and with all thy Heart, S

and Will; and then thy worship will be accepted with the Lord, and in thy worship also thou wilt walk before the Lord in Truth.

Another Explication of *walking before the Lord in Truth*, is, to walk in such a way as is Butted and Bound- ed in his word, which is Truth. This seems to be the most proper Acceptation and Understanding thereof, for to make Gods written Word and Revelation our Guide and Rule throughout the whole Course of our Life, is a walk- ing before the Lord in Truth, and it is the true and right way to Heaven, as to go through or by such and such places, is the way to such a City or the like. The Word and Truth of God are near one and the same thing. *Sanctify them through thy Truth, Thy word is Truth,* John 17. 17. And so the walking according to the Word of God, or the having our Conversation according to the Gospel, is to walk before God in Truth. And so it is reciprocally, To walk before the Lord in Truth, is to walk according to the Word of God: Every Variation, or Deviation from it is a false way. *Therefore I esteem all thy Precepts concerning all things to be Right, and I hate e- very false way.*

It was both a Puzzling and also a sudden Question of Pilate, *What is Truth?* To me it seems to be the expres- sing forth the Nature of things as they are, with the Connexion between themselves and how they pertain to us Men. Things again are divided into things present and things to come. Now to know the very Nature of both these, and how they belong unto, and are to be had by us, What is Good for us, and what is Evil for us, so as to choose the Good and Refuse the Evil, this is Truth. Here again, to make a Right Judgment and Choice for our selves, so as to pursue the best of Ends (*viz.* Future Blessedness and Glory) by Lawful and Right means, *This a walking before the Lord in Truth.*

And so it may be conceived of in other like In- stances.

As to the Second Particular, *What it is to walk before the Lord with a perfect heart.* Paul gives the Character of some Jews, that they had a *Good mind towards God.* And here, Put and Conceive this together along with that, a

good mind towards God, and to walk before him with a perfect Heart, do contain the Sum and Excellency, and Attainment of all Religion; so as to make it accepted with God; for what would God have more of his Creatures, then that they should have a good mind towards him, and walk before him with a Perfect Heart?

Before we shew what this last is, it may be observed, how that as it is written, *The Eyes of all wait upon thee.* So the thoughts of all Men and VVomen, altho' many of them are cumbred about many things pertaining to this Life, and tho' too many do forget God; yet still the Thoughts of every one of them more or less, are towards their Invisible Creatour. Namely, That it is with them in this present State, according as he orders and disposes. But especially the great thought and searching of heart is, what he will do to them in the future State. Saith the Psalmist, *I Remembred God and was troubled; I complained and my Spirit was over-whelmed.* Even so, all other things we could bear, for they are little and soon pass away: But as God was the Creatour of our whole Being at first; so upon him doth depend our whole future Being (thence doth arise up great thought and searching of Heart) VVhither the same shall be Happy or Miserable, Good or Evil unto us. And many times from the fear and apprehension, that it will be evil and miserable to the Creature, as to Futurity, thence doth arise Enmity and Hatred towards their Creator. *And you that were sometimes Alienated and Enemies through wicked works, yet now hath he Reconciled,* Col. 1. 21. And so according as People have been sinners or sinful, so Proportionably their Minds are Evil, or Evil affected towards God, out of a slavish fear and dread, least he should intrest VVrath, Punishment and Misery on them hereafter. But Contrariwise, as they obey his Commandments and do the things that please him, they have Hope and Expectation of good things to come; and thence doth arise in them a good mind towards God; which doth shew and express it self forth in Obedience, Honour, Love and Good will towards him. VVhich two last again, because none can give unto God (*For who hath given to him and it shall be recompensed to him again*) is shewn forth to the Saints that

that are on the Earth, and to the excellent (*as the Righteous is more excellent than his Neighbour*) who come nearer to the likeness of God than others of their fellow Creatures. All the Acts of worship or outward Religion signify nothing, and they do not avail as to *receive any thing from the Lord, without this one thing of a good mind towards God.* Which is shewed particularly in 1 Cor. 13. Where it is said, *Tho' I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor,* and so it is of all the Gifts and Good works in the world, without Charity (which in the Greek Language signifies Love, or this Good mind towards God) *it all Profits nothing.* So again it is on the other hand, if any hath this good mind towards God, or comes to walk before him with a perfect heart, altho' he doth not altogether abound so much in Acts of outward Religion (altho' he will constantly wait upon God in all his Ordinances, as hearing of his word is one of them) nor yet make so great an outward shew therein, *I will not Reprove thee for thy Sacrifices, or thy Burnt-offerings to have been continually before me,* Plal. 50. 8. Yet God is now better pleased with such an one, and he shall be sooner saved hereafter, than if another should like *Anna, Depart not from the Temple, and serve God with Fastings and Prayers Night and Day,* Luke 2. 37. Or be continually Reading in the Bible, and do all this out of a slavish Mercenary Principle of saving the Soul; but all the same while they have not a good mind towards God, nor walk before him with a perfect heart, as there have been many such outward Worshipers and meer Devotionists, especially in the *Romish* and our National Church. *To do Judgment and Justice is more Acceptable unto the Lord than Sacrifice.*

*To walk before God with a Perfect heart,* denotes and requires, That it be whole and compleat, and that nothing be wanting. And so when we Read often in Scripture of *serving or seeking the Lord with all their Heart, or with their whole Heart.* As again on the other side, Many are Reproved, and found Fault with, *Because their Heart was not whole with God, nor continued they steadfast in his Covenant;* This is the same in signification with that of *walking before the Lord with a Perfect Heart.* VVe Read often in the Books of *Samuel, Kings* and the *Chro-*



*nicles* where the Histoty of the Kings of *Judah* and *Jerusalem* is recorded, That Character is given of some, *That they did follow and cleave unto the Lord with their whole Heart, but most did not.* But there was some Exception, or Reserve, wherein *Part of their Heart did go after Idols, or their own Imaginations.* So is the case with the common sort of People. Each of us have a Good Obedient heart towards God in some Things, but not in all Things, and so it is not a Perfect heart: For that is Perfect to which Nothing is Wanting, but in the hearts of such is Wanting alike Obedience to the Law of God in other Things, as what they do Render and Yield: And so it is as to the Word of God, The heart of People doth Love and relish the Word of God in some Things, but not in all Things; for according as either People have kept or Transgressed against it, so they either like or conceive an Enmity, or a Rising and Rebellion in their hearts against it. The Drunkard or Sottish Person doth not Really and Inwardly Love all those Texts of Scripture, which make against that sin, or which Threaten a Wo and Misery to come to those who follow it. So it is with the Unrighteous or Unclean Person, They have secret inward rancour and Indignation against that Part of the Word of God, which finds out and speaks against their several and Particular sins. We may hereby somewhat apprehend what exceeding Evil there is in sin. As it is written, *Three Shepherds also I cut off in one Month, and my Soul lothed them, and their Soul also abhorred me.* Zech. **III.** 18. This was their sin and fault. So the case standeth between God and the sinner, The Soul of God lotheth the sinner, and the Soul of the sinner also abhorreth God. This should be a prevailing consideration for every one to stand in Aw and sin not: Because that Each Act of Advised, Deliberate and continued sin carries and contains in it a lothing and abhorring of God himself. As again God lothes his own Creature, the Work of his own hands, as he sees sin in them. This Lothing and abhorring either of the Creatour towards the Creature, or of the Creature towards the Creatour, is as directly opposite and contrary to the having a Good mind towards God, as Darknes is unto Light. It is also contrary unto a Perfect heart, for this

this is an Imperfection to a Witness ; Yea such an Imperfection that unless it be remedied and taken away, it will lay the Creature in Punishment and Misery.

As for mine own Part, although in my common or week Day Life and conversation, I have spoken and done Many Things, which are contrary unto, different from, and not according to the Pure VVord of God ; yet I do not therefore dare to Hate or Reproach that same Word ; Nor yet (for none doth so as to the VVord abstractedly) to the Person of him who ministreth or speaketh forth the same VVord against this my Sin and Errour. For I know, this would make the Guilt of my Sin seven times yet Greater, and Consequently Uengeance would be taken on me sevenfold when the Lord comes to Punish the VVorld for their Evil and the wicked for their Iniquity. But I Judge it safe to lay my Hand upon my Mouth, and hold my Peace ; and where I see my self faulty to Endeavour to mend. And *where I have not already attained, neither am already Perfect.* Phil. 3. 12. There to Go on to Perfection. Heb 6. 1. Avoiding the Errour and deceit of the VVorld herein of always Purposing and Resolving and not performing accordingly ; or of complaining and yet not mending : But we should still Press forwards and Undeavour Unfeignedly so to do. Not to attain unto absolute Perfection is the Infirmary of the Flesh ; but not to endeavour after it is the fault and failure of the Spirit. Here again it must be acknowledged, that to walk before the Lord with a Perfect Heart, is sooner said then done. For it is the whole which God requires of Man, It being the first and Great Commandment, *Thou shalt Love the Lord thy God, With all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength and with all thy Mind.* This Particle, *All*, being Annexed to all the Faculties and Powers thereof, makes it a Perfect Heart : For so it is, where is all, or the whole of a Thing.

Besides this Appeal which *Hezekiah* makes unto God in his Pining Sicknes not by way of self Commendation, but as a stay and support to his Mind under that outward Evil of Body, The Spirit it self gives a very Good Character of him, *And he did that which was Right in the sight of the Lord according to all that David his Father did.* He trust-

ed in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him, among all the Kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. 2. Kings. 18. 3, 5. So that his doing according to all that David his Father did (who was a Man after Gods one heart in all Things saving the matter of *Uriah the Hittite*) Thus in reality and in Truth *Hezekiah did walk before the Lord with a perfect Heart.*

By this also may be seen that the Spirit of God keeps a Register of each Man or Womans Life. And God who is no Respector of Persons, but in every Nation he that feareth him and worketh Righteousness is accepted with him; *Who accepteth not the Person of Princes, nor regardeth the Rich more then the Poor, for they are all the Work of his hands,* doth in alike manner keep a Book. (*Put thou my Tears into thy Bottle, are not these things noted in thy Book?*) Wherein the several deeds here done in the Body of all the Particular Men and Women of all Generations and Countreys, from the greatest of them unto the least of them, are written and noted all one, as we see it written thus and thus, of the several Kings of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, how they did carry it towards the Lord God; for so we may read it thus or thus, recorded of the Inhabitants of the Earth in the Scriptures of Truth.

There is an Emphatical and Pertinent Scripture to our present purpose, in *Hos. 10. 2. Their heart is divided, now they shall be found faulty.* A divided heart is not a perfect heart; and as long as it remains thus divided we hence see, that it will be found and pronounced faulty, that is defective or wanting in the sight, Estimation, Judgment and Account of God. And yet alas! Is not this the case of us all, or of most of us, Is not our heart divided, one part is towards God, and another part is for the World, and for the Men and Things therein? According to what *Paul* speaketh of himself, *So then with the mind I my self serve the Law of God, but with the flesh the Law of sin,* Rom. 7. 25. He that doth not observe and feel the like within himself, is Blind, Ignorant and knows nothing as he ought to know. Doth not one part of our heart Savour the things of God? And again, another part of our heart doth Savour the Things of Men. I

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discern and experience it so in my self. Now this is but a divided heart, which God in *Hosea* finds fault with. And when he saith in the *Proverbs*, *My Son give me thine heart*, It may be truly reasoned and concluded, that he will have a whole heart or none. And hereupon the word of Instruction and Exhortation arises on this wise, that this same *divided heart* must be cut off (*Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your hearts, that ye be no more stiff-necked*) or rather changed and renewed, that all the heart may be brought into intire obedience, Subjection and Conformity to God, till it becomes a good and perfect heart which He is well pleased with and delights in and will accept off, for want whereof it is, that we neither find God, nor yet doth he hear our Prayers. The heart hankers after some Carnal Lust, or other Sin, or Act of Disobedience (Consider of this thoroughly and amend thy ways and thy doings O my Soul) and therefore the Lord hath withdrawn himself, and hides his Face, and doth not manifest himself unto us as He did in former Days. *But your Iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his Face from you that He will not hear*, Isa. 59. 2. So that where we cry and the Lord doth not hear, or where we do not find such an Answer and Return to Prayer as we have experienced heretofore, there let us examine our selves, whither there be not some Sin or Iniquity (which is the Cloud that hinders, that our Prayers do not pass through) in us, which God is displeased with. Here our heart is *divided and found faulty*; for with some part of it, it obeys or serves some Sin or Lust, *O Lord our God, other Lords besides thee have had Dominion over us*, Isa. 26. 13. And we do not seek or serve him our whole heart. *But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou shalt seek him with all thy heart and with all thy Soul*, Deut. 4. 29. *And ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart, and I will be found of you saith the Lord*, Jer. 29. 13, 14. In both these observable Scriptures is contained the inseparable condition annexed, to which the promise is made of acceptance from the Lord, *If thou shalt seek him with all thy Heart and with all thy Soul*. There must be no Exception or

Reserve



Reserve, and nothing in the least is to be taken out of the heart, for it to be fixed or employed about, saving God only and the things pertaining to his Kingdom. This is to walk before the Lord with a perfect heart, which did yield to *Hezekiah* so much inward comfort, as streamed forth in outward Tears when He laid upon his Bed of Sickness. It will do the same also to every one besides that shall do the like things. As we have a further Example and confirmation hereof in another Servant of the Lord, who thus witnesseth of himself, *That we were pressed out of measure, above strength; insomuch that we despaired even of Life. But we had the Sentence of Death in our selves* (this was a sad Case and Extremity. But he goes on to add sweetly) *for our rejoicing is this, the Testimony of our Conscience, That in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God we have had our Conversation in the World,* 2 Cor. 1. 9. 10.

12. Hence may be seen again the absolute necessity of Godly Life foregoing, which is to yield this rejoicing. Hence also suspect and tremble at, and do not for Ten Thousand Worlds trust thy Soul upon that uncertainty of huddling up the matter by a Death-Bed Repentance which will Administer Horrour, or only Carnal Peace and Stupidity; which will be after followed by the gnawing of the Worm which shall never die. For such can never make that comfortable Reflexion as *Hezekiah* did in the Text, *Remember now O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.*

This is the Third thing proposed to be spoken unto.

And here I would recommend to all such as shall Read this (which may also be applied unto the two foregoing particulars) That whatever ye do meet with in the course of your Reading the Scriptures (which were given to make us wise unto Salvation) concerning doing good, Be here instructed that this is written for your Admonition also. The Time would fail me to speak of all those many and several Texts of Scripture, which speak of this Thing of doing Good. Now as all Making or Preaching of Sermons (if they be managed aright) are but a Reasoning out

the Scriptures concerning the same Things : So if the Hearers or Readers of the Word would also compare Place with Place ; and narrowly mind and observe from within themselves what further Significative and true Thoughts do arise from thence, they might be Preachers also, at least to themselves, that is to their own Hearts or Consciences. In which sense they might Hear a Sermon, or rather a still Voice within them, dictating to Good and Testifying against Evil all the week long.

Whereas I could bring more out of this Treasury of Divine Truths as pertaining to this Subject, I shall Instance but in two or three Texts of Scripture, that being Sufficient, *for in the Mouth of two or three Witnesses every Word shall be established.* The first is, *Psal. 37. 3. Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily thou shalt be fed.* Whereby is shewn forth, That Good is not only to be done at the time of our Death, but even in the very midst of and throughout the time, we dwell in the Land, that is on this Earth where we now Inhabit. And by the first and last words of this Verse, *Trust in the Lord, verily thou shalt be fed.* The Holy Ghost doth hereby tacitly anticipate and meet with an Objection or Surmise in heart, as if People should think or say, that if they did Good, they should be impoverished and come to want themselves. But here by Arming their minds before-hand, with *Trust in the Lord*, which is a relative Term and Presupposes danger and difficulty, through which God will carry them for all ; and then comes in at the close thereof, *Verily thou shalt be fed.* This again satisfies the heart, not so much of the Natural Man who doth not altogether so well discern these things, but it doth the Spiritual Man and Faithful Soul, who doth discern and lay hold of the promise so far, that tho' if He should do so much good as He would, He must of necessity sell all his Estate, or give all his Goods to feed the Poor (for that of Almsgiving seems to be the doing of good here meant and intended) yet nevertheless, He will do some good according to his Ability ; And also withal observe the Rules of Justice to his Kindred and Family, as well as those of Mercy and Almsgiving to the Poor. For this is a constant Rule, that we should not break

break one Commandment of God, to yet more fulfill another; Nor yet jostle and thrust out one Duty out of greater Zeal for the observance of another. For as hath been aforesaid, *We should walk before God with a perfect heart*: Even so good should be done Universally without doing it, only in some things and not in other things.

*Good Man will guide his Affairs with Discretion*, Psal. 112. 5. So He is good in all Relations, and will approve himself Universally so in all things, in all Times and Places and in reference to all Persons.

The Second Scripture which I shall Instance in, is, John 5. 29. *They that have done Good shall come forth unto the Resurrection of Life*. This again is to be Understood of having done good throughout the course of our Life here on Earth. So wonderfully much doth the Scripture speak of and make for this Thing of Good Life. And *Hezekiah* knowing this by the same Spirit, that the having done Good would intitle to the Resurrection of Life, like as a Man who is a drowning or sinking doth catch hold somewhat to save and Preserve himself, so he doth he fittingly and properly make his Appeal unto God on this will now he was a surrendring up his Life into his hands, of a Desire and Expectation that a Better and more Enduring Life may be Given unto him instead thereof. *Remember now O Lord I beseech thee, how I have done thee which is Good in thy Sight*.

The Third Scripture which I think convenient and necessary to alledge for this Purpose is Acts. 10. 38. *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with Power; who went about doing Good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil; for God was with him*. The same Jesus is elsewhere called the Prince of Life. Acts. 15. in the Margent it is, the Author of Life.

By which may be seen what a Relation and tendency the doing of Good hath unto Life. Now Jesus Christ not only suffered, but also lived an Example, that *we should follow his steps*. And this Place in Acts. 10. 38. so written, to the Intent, that every one of us who would Love and Inherit Eternal Life. (*What Man is He that desireth Life?* Answer is made, *Depart from Evil and do Good*, Psal. 34. 12, 14.) Should in our several Respects

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Stations, and according to our several Ability and Capacity, go about and do good also ; for so far as we do this, *God is with us.* Whereby again may be seen, and perceived the Goodness of that Supreme and Almighty Being. *Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil.*

Hence again, We may understand what a doing of good is; for as the being oppressed of the Devil is an Evil, so to have that same Evil either removed or taken away, or cured and healed, this is a doing good. By the way, the worst oppression of the Devil is, when Sin and Guilt is brought into the Conscience through his Temptations or Instruments. And so it is, as to all other evils or harms whatever, the either taking them away, or curing and healing them is a doing good. It is written of him that did the greatest and all the good that was ever done to Mankind. When the Even was come they brought unto him many that were possessed with Devils, and He cast out the Devils with his word, and healed all that were Sick, *That might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the Prophet, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses,* Mat. 8. 16, 17. The very Words in *Isaiah* are these, *Surely He hath born our Grievs and Carried our Sorrows,* Isa. 53. And it being after added, *The Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all, for He shall bear their Iniquities and He are the sin of Many,* Verse 6. 11, 12. This goes further even to the Fountain Head, the Original cause and source of Infirmities, Sicknels, Grievs and Sorrows; for Sin and Iniquity is the cause of them all. This is effectual and sound work. And as sin is the greatest and only evil: so to cure, heal, take away, Remedy, or someway or other to provide against sin, is doing the greatest Good. So that to Instruct the Ignorant is a doing good, yea, and resemblance to him who was the Author and Finisher of our faith, who went about doing good, for we Read that he sat down and taught his Disciples and the Multitude. This is a kind of doing the greatest good; for it is a doing good unto the Immortal Soul, the more excellent part of us, and not only to the dying Body. *Brethren, if any of you do*



*err from the Truth, and one convert him, let him know that which converteth the sinner from the Errour of his Way, shall save a Soul from Death and shall hide a Multitude of sin.* James. 5. 19 20. And so by the Words of Gods Grace and Truth to Perswade, Testify and Exhort People from their Sinful and Ungodly courses, From living in Religion and contempt of God, as that if continued would involve them into the Greatest of Evils, So consequentially it must be the Greater Good to disswade them from it. And then Giving Alms to the Poor, and Mitigating comfort to the Sorrowful, in as much as Poverty and Sorrow are sore Evils, and such like are instances of doing Good. The more and Greater Good People receive here, the Greater and more full Reward they will receive hereafter. As again it is on the other worse hand, the more sin any one do commit, *It is a treasuring up Wrath to themselves against the day of Wrath*; which consideration should be a prevailing motive to cease from the one and do the other as much as ever we can.

*Remember how I have done that which is Good in the sight.* Now all Things are in the sight of God. But to do that which is Good in his sight, may have a twofold Sense and Meaning, either to do Things in order and attention unto God; and upon that Respect it is that we do Good, because God commands, requires and is well pleased therewith, when we do it as unto the Lord and as unto Men. As also, what will appear Good in the sight of the Lord now and by his Judgment hereafter. For it is one Thing to do Good as in the sight of the Lord and another as in the sight of Men. For the Lord seeth not as Man seeth. *That which is highly esteemed amongst Men is an Abomination in the sight of the Lord.* And so it runs, and may be conceived contrariwise, That which is highly esteemed by the Lord God, is less esteemed and despised amongst Men, *For these call that which is good in the sight of the Lord.* And again, *They that do that Good which is Evil,* Isa. 5. 20. But a Godly Hezekiah or that Soul like unto Godly Hezekiah, doth regard as in the sight of the Lord, and not as in the sight of Men.

As the Lord said unto Sarah, *At the time appointed will I return to thee, according to the time of Life, Gen. 18. 14.* So at the time appointed when the great Day of his Judgment is come, will God Judge every one of us according to the Time of Life, and as it was with us at such a Time of Life and such a Time of Life, (of some we shall give a better Account than of others) so as to take in the whole Term of Life, from the time that we had the first Knowledge of Good and Evil, unto the Day of our Death.)

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# SERMON IV.

O N

Isaiah XXXVIII. 2, 3.

*Then Hezekiah turned his Face toward the Wall and Prayed unto the Lord; And said, Remember now O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a Perfect Heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight, and Hezekiah wept sore.*

**T**HAT we do walk all our Days in the sight of the Lord, and whatever we do it is in the sight of the Lord, and how that God will Judge us for all the Thoughts, Words and Actions of our whole Life, even from the very time that we had the Knowledge of Good and Evil, are most forcible considerations, what manner of Persons we ought to be in all Holy Conversation and Godliness, in all Obedience and Righteousness, In Purity and Innocency, and Uprightness of Life. In all thy work and in whatever thine hand findeth thee to do, in thy Feastings, Sportings, or Recreations, Do thou awfully and constantly Remember that God seeth thee and God will Judge thee. And after any thing is over and past, whither it be an Act of Good and Duty, or else an Act of Sin or Evil, This know that the same is passed over into a thing to be Judged off; and for the

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same thou shalt receive Reward or Punishment, Gain or Loss at the last Day. O that we could once have a lively, true and through sense, how that we Live and Act all along in the sight of the unseen God ; whom tho' we do not see, yet He seeth us. And then we should be as careful to please and approve our selves unto him in all things, as ever any Servant was to his Master, any Maiden to her Mistress, or as any Poor Person is to his Rich and Bountiful Benefactor, or as we study to please those whom we most Love and are most beholden unto. As God standeth behind the skreen of the visible Creatures and always looketh on the Inhabitants of the Earth : So we should abstract from these visible things and outward objects, and with the Eyes of our understanding being enlightened and turned inward, We should look towards our Maker ; and as both our selves and all our ways are in his sight ( *He seeth the way that I take* ) even so we should with the Eye of Faith continually see him that is Invisible. And this is to walk before God, or with God, as the Scripture doth express it and recommend the same unto us. *And Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him, Gen. 5. 24.* Even so for us severally to walk with God, whilst we dwell here on the Face of the Earth, that when here we shall be no more (as it is evident that here we do not continue by Reason of Dearth God may take us unto himself into the highest Heaven for evermore. It was not without good Reason, that when *Hezekiah* had received the sentence of Death which is a removal from this Earth, that He should then in a most proper manner make his appeal unto God of this wise, *Remember O Lord, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a Perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy Sight ;* For He knew this to be the ready way by his having done thus, that now He was to be taken away from the City of *Jerusalem*, for God to take him up to himself into the Habitation of Holiness.

The same God, who in wisdom made and ordereth all things, lent us so many Days here on Earth on purpose to call us to an Account and to Judge us for the same. This consideration and inference whereof should be this

to our selves, Namely, That we should so live every Day as we will averr and justify, and stand by the same at the Bar of God, and as we will Answer for it at his Judgment Seat. For if we are resolved and purposed on this wise, then we should do nothing but what is Lawful and Right; For when God enters into Judgment, nothing but what is so, *shall be justified in his sight*. And whether we are of that foregoing Purpose and Resolution of mind or not, yet still we must unavoidably give Account and be Judged for the several deeds done in the Body, whether they be Good or Evil. We must be Judged as certain as that we must die, which again is as certain as that we now live.

This is the difference between the Godly and Righteous, and the Wicked, Ungodly, or Ignorant People of the World; The former part so live, as thinking and knowing before hand that they must be judged; and therefore they are for preparing and making up their Account before hand, They are for doing all things that they may stand in that Day, and they do intreat their Judge in the mean while for his Favour, Acceptation and Reconciliation, and Acquital against the Great Day of Everlasting Decision. But the Wicked, Ungodly and Ignorant do live at Random, and in Forgetfulness, or Unmindfulness of the future Judgment; They being resolved on their way (*I have loved strangers and after them I will go*) They do things at a venture, and they run the risque of the future Judgment; and so they are in danger to be *broken, snared and taken*, to fall and be Condemned in that Day. In a word, Let People do whatever they will in the mean time, yet the Great Day of Judgment will surely come and will not tarry one moment longer beyond the appointed Time. This we are now warned of again before hand, that when it shall come we may have the less excuse or Plea, that of this and of every Day of our Life after Years of Discretion, we are not only in danger, but we shall be certainly called to an Account.

As the Wise Man saith, *Remember the End and thou shalt never do amiss*. So it may be applied and reasoned a little further, keep the Judgment of God always in thine Eye, and thou shalt never go much astray.

*And Hezekiah wept sore.*

In the Margent it is, with great weeping. Here it may be furnished and asked, What need had *Hezekiah* to weep *sore*, or with a Great Weeping, seeing that He had led to Good a Life, which must needs Administer much Comfort and Rejoycing? But a manifold Reason may be assigned thereof, as will appear in the Sequel of our Discourse. One is from that Natural fear and dread which all Men (both Good and Bad) have at the Instant Approaches of Death; especially those under the Old Testament Dispensation (as *Hezekiah* was under that) wherein future Life and Immortality were not so clearly and distinctly revealed and made known, as under the Gospel.

Altho' in the midst of Youth, Life, Health and Vigour, we can think of Death without Weeping. Probably a Melancholly sigh, or a secret inward and sad thought may arise at the serious and through apprehension thereof. But when indeed it shall stand before us like an Armed Man or Messenger, and say to the Soul, *Come along with me*, then it is no easy matter to *Refrain our Voice from Weeping and our Eyes from Tears*, for that our works shall be judged; and we are going away from the Land, where we had if not all, yet most things comfortable and convenient for us, tho' none truly satisfactory unto us. In the midst of Prosperity, we do not know throughly what Adversity is; and as in the midst of fulness we cannot then so well feel what Pinching Hunger is, even in the midst of Life, *Tho' we are in Death*, that is, subject unto and drawing towards Death; yet then we know not throughly what Death is. The Ruffling Royster, or the Jolly Merry Man of the World, may cast a Contemptuous Smile or Pish at the Hearing of Death when it is afar off from him; but when it shall approach nigh and touch him, when He shall be Death struck, and the shadow of Death shall sit upon his Eye-lids, then his former Smile, or Proud Scorn and Disdain, will be turned into Weeping and Real inward Sorrow. If People will be ever serious, they will be so when they come to lie on their Death-Beds, and as Death doth Naturally fix the Countenance, so it is evidently and sensibly seen to work People into

into a great Composedness and Seriousness of Spirit: For then indeed it is a weighty and near affecting thing, that the Soul is going about when she is a going away into Life Eternal, or into Everlasting Punishment; when she hath but one Cast or Throw, which is to make the Final and Everlasting Decision for Endless Happiness or Misery. We see by Poor Malefactors when they come to receive the due reward of their deeds, what a crying and howling will they make at the Place of Execution; and this they do not so much for the Pains which they shall undergo, In being cut off hastily and violently from this Land of the living, but out of a fearful Expectation of yet greater misery to come. But *Hezekiah's* weeping sore, or great weeping was not for this Reason, for his Life was *True, Perfect and Good*; So that after him, none was like unto him among all the Kings of Judah. And God that cannot lie, hath now under the Gospel promised *Eternal Life to the patient continuance in well doing*; Rom. 2. 7. But probably *Hezekiah* did not know of this, as the Saints and Servants of God of latter Ages do. And then like one who is turned and dispossessed out of a Cottage, may at first take it in Indignation and Vexation, when He then knows not that it is in order to be removed into a Pallace or finer House, as He afterwards finds it. So *Hezekiah* then not knowing, that if He should be taken out of his Earthly Pallace, that He should be received up into Heaven the City of the Great King which would be much better, He might probably think it Irsome and a Loss to be taken from the other. That *Hezekiah* was partly Ignorant of thus much, appears from his own Words in the following Part of this Chapter; *For the Grave cannot Praise thee, Death cannot Celebrate thee; They that go down to the Pit cannot Hope for thy Truth.* This last He spake as one under that Dispensation from the Mount Sinah which *gendreth Bondage*, Gal. 4. 24. And so this his Distrust and Ignorance did Gender Tears and Weeping in him. But by your leave Good *Hezekiah*, we under the Gospel can contradict the latter part of your saying, for from thence we do believe, yea we know and are assured, that they which go down to the Pit, can and do Hope for Gods Truth. And Notwithstanding it is Written in the Old



Testament, *For in Death there is no Remembrance of thee*. Yet now Christ hath abolished Death, and brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Gospel, we can truly contradict that, saying also, for in Death there is most Remembrance of God ; For the Remembrance which we have of God in this life is much less and as no Remembrance in Comparison of what Remembrance of God we shall have in and after our several Deaths. And we now can give a Plain and Satisfactory Answer in the Affirmative, altho' by its being asked so short it seems to imply a strong Negation, for we know that God will shew wonders to the Dead (as that will be a wonderful thing indeed to fulfill in a literal sense in the last Day what is Written in *Ezek. 37. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.*) And the Dead will Arise and Praise God, *Psal. 88. 10.* And our flesh also shall rest in Hope, for it shall be raised up and rendered intire flesh again, Notwithstanding it will for some time be left in the Grave and see Corruption, as the Holy one of God did not, when Jesus Christ shall change our vile Body, that it may be Fashioned like unto his Glorious Body according to his working, whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Here is to be observed that Good and Godly Mind of *Hezekiah* and of *David* ; for these did weep and were grieved at Death, because they thought that thereby they should be hindred from Praising of God, and telling of his Truth and Wonderful Works, They thought they should be deprived of his Worship, and from having any Sense and Remembrance of him. Which as to be with God is the greatest Happiness of Man, especially to the Soul that seeketh and serveth him, who loveth and delighteth in him and chooleth the things that please him. So to be without God in the World, or to be turned into nothing after Death in Respect of God, this is the greatest misery of Man, especially if it be considered what an Unexpressible Benefit, Comfort and Satisfaction it is to be with God. Herein the Godly and Gracious Soul, is quite opposite and perfectly contrary unto the Ungodly and Graceless Person ; for the first cannot bear or away with the thoughts of being without God, both in this Life and in the Life to come. Nothing less will

suffice

suffice that Soul then to be with God for ever, and to have God for her Portion for ever. But the Ungodly and Graceless Person as He is *An alien from the common wealth of Israel and without God in the World*; For he makes it his own wretched and willful choice to be so. And herein tho' He was made in Honour, capable to know God, to serve him and enjoy him hereafter, yet by not understanding and doing thereafter, He doth become like the Beasts that Perish. So such an one would desire with all his heart, to be without God in the other World also, for He fears and apprehends, and expects no Good from him, but Evil; For in the other World He will be either the God of Mercy, or the Lord to whom Vengeance belongeth. He will be so one of these two ways, unto all the Reasonable Inhabitants of the Earth. And who would not fear him in this World, shall feel him in the next. Those who in this Life did despise and would not accept of his Goodness, shall partake and be sensible of his severity in the next. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God.*

Every Sinner or Ungodly Person is a Fool, as may be demonstrated particularly. And as it is Written, *The Fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.* Even so they that are corrupt and have done abominable works, the Sinner and Ungodly, the Hypocrite do indeed wish and desire that there was no God, for they would not have God Reign over them. But that same wish and desire of theirs is as Vain and Impossible, as it is yet further provoking and makes their sin yet exceeding more sinful in the sight of him, with whom we have to do. What strange Imaginations do sinners conceive in their minds, that they may not receive in themselves a Recompence meet for their Evil deeds; which yet are all to no purpose, avail or behoof as any other ways to possibly avoid the Wrath and Indignation of God against them. *They had better agree with their Adversary quickly whilst they are yet in the way. Or let him take hold of my strength, that He may make Peace with me, and He shall make Peace with me, Isa. 27. 5.* As the Apostle Paul could cry out, *O wretched Man that I am, Who shall deliver me from this Body of Death?* So this, or the like Exclamation may be taken up, O the

exceeding Evil and Guilt of Sin, Who shall deliver the Sinner from all the Evils that are due unto him for it? None but *Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come,*

And that also He will do no other way, *Then in turning away every one of you from his Iniquities,* Acts 3. 26. So that if the sinner will not turn away from his Iniquities, He shall feel all the Evil consequents that follow upon it. We may see somewhat thereof in the Glass of the word; But we shall not fully know the utmost Evil and Sinfullness of Sin, until in the future State we come to see the wrath of God and what kind of Punishment He will inflict for the same; Which indeed will be a Judgment worthy of God, and an Horrible Vengeance shall overtake the ungodly. *The Righteous shall rejoyce when He seeth the Vengeance, He shall wash his Feet in the Blood of the Wicked.* So it will be the return and saying, not of *David* only, but of the other Saints saved by the Lord, which shall stand by when He shall Judge the World, and make distribution of Good or Evil, to every one according as their deeds have been, then it will be returned and said, *Horror hath taken hold of me, because of the wicked which forsake thy Law,* Psal. 119. 53.

The Godly and Ungodly are of two different minds as indeed they must be so, for otherwise the one would not have been Godly and the other Ungodly. A Godly *Hezekiah* of Old Time did weep, because He thought that by Death, He should be for ever deprived and hindered from the Praise and Worship of God, and from enjoying sweet Communion with him again. Wherein He was Ignorant, for Death doth only make way to enjoy Ten Thousand times more and longer Communion with God. But the Ungodly of our Days do weep and howl near the time of their Death, because they think and dread that they shall meet with God in the other World. What makes them to weep and howl is, because they expect no Good but Evil from him, as so indeed they will have if they receive the due Reward of their Deeds, Luk. 23. 41. As the Ungodly now count it a Priviledge to willingly absent themselves from and neglect the Worship of God, for they Account that an Irksome

Dull and Tedious thing, so they could be contented to sleep for evermore and not Praise God throughout all Eternity ; They have no miss of that, because they take no delight therein ; as indeed Praise is not seemly in the Mouth of a Sinner. *An unholy Creature, cannot Praise an Holy God ;* And in this sense it is true, when understood of such as are Dead in Trespasses and Sins, for the Grave cannot Praise thee, Death cannot Celebrate thee : *But who so offereth Praise, Glorifieth me, and to him that ordereth his Conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God,* Psal. 50. 23. And it is He only who ordereth his Conversation aright, doth aright offer Praise ; and who so aright offereth Praise, Glorifieth God.

Tho' Peradventure *Hezekiah* might have a little apprehension thereof, yet He had not a through and full knowledge of future Life and Immortality, and it was this which caused him to weep sore. For any one would be apt to weep at a Message, how they are to be bereaved off and taken from all Good Things here, and not to know where to have others in their stead.

As to all this the VVord of Consolation speaketh on this wise to such as lived under the Old Testament Dispensation, *Thus saith the Lord, a Voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation and bitter Weeping, Rachel Weeping for her Children, refused to be Comforted for her Children, because they were not.* So it is all the VVorld over, People are Irrecoverably deprived of Persons and Things, and as there was some comfort in the having of them, so it is inward Anguish and Grief, Lamentation and Bitter VVeeping, when People consider thoroughly that they once had such good things, as Children, Friends and Relations, and such like, *and they are not.* Neither can they possibly be again when Dead, unless they should come forth and appear again to us ( as they will ) in the future State and Resurrection. Now comes in the VVord of Answer and Comfort, to the foregoing Complaint and VVeeping, *Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy Voice from weeping and thine Eyes from Tears, for thy work shall be rewarded saith the Lord, and they shall come again from the Land of the Enemy,* Jer. 31. 15, 16. As in the Verses following our Text, *The Word of the Lord saith unto Hezekiah, I have*  
heard



*heard thy Prayer, I have seen thy Tears.* So in this Place of *Jeremiah*, The Lord saith unto *Hezekiah*, and to all his Servants together under the Old Testament Dispensation. Thus saith the Lord unto *Hezekiah*, under whom may be understood all the Faithful, *Refrain thy Voice from Weeping and Thine Eyes from Tears, for thy True, Perfect and Good Life shall be rewarded, saith the Lord.* And so the Lord saith unto all the Inhabitants of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, who did obey and serve him, and who lived before the Time his Son *Jesus Christ* was manifested in the flesh, *Refrain your Voices from Weeping and your Eyes from Tears; for your works shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, and they shall come again from the Land of the Enemy.*

To have faithfully and diligently served God all our Life time, and it may be for that to have sustained several VVorldly Losses and Inconveniencies, and after all to have no future Good or Reward thereof, would be apt to raise Anguish in the Heart, and Tears in the Eyes. But then here to have assurance from the VVord and Promise of God (whom it is impossible for to lie) that it shall be made up and considered, this again will effect it so, *That they shall refrain their Voice from Weeping and their Eyes from Tears.*

*And they shall come again from the Land of the Enemy.*

This Scripture was in Part fulfilled, as the Evangelists doth shew, *When Herod sent forth and slew all the Children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the Coasts thereof, from two Years Old and Under, according to the Time that He had diligently enquired of the Wise Men, Mat. 2. 16.* Now when these Infants were Murdered, they were thereby sent into the Land of the Enemy, which is Death, for the last Enemy is Death. Now as Lamentation and Bitter VVeeping was occasioned by Reason of that, by consequence there must be comfort, when they shall come again from the Land of the Enemy. This may be understood of all the Children of *Rachel*, and not only those Murdered by *Herod*, for He slew more then what were the Children of *Rachel*, even some of the Children of *Leah* also, who was Mother of Six Tribes, *Gen. 30. 20.* And *Rachel* was but of two, *Viz. Joseph* and *Benjamin*.

*min. Now Herod slew all the Children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the Coasts thereof. So it must take in all the descendants from Jacob or Israel. But because that Rachel was the most true and proper VVife of Jacob, the VVife of his Covenant and Labour, and because she was most concerned and affected for her Children, therefore the Holy Ghost makes use of her Name, for indeed she was somewhat a Type and Signification of the Church of God. And Answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in Bondage with her Children, Gal. 4. 25. The Enemy meant and spoken of in Scripture, is Sin, Death, and the Devil. And He shall thrust out the Enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them, Deu. 33. 27. O thou Enemy, Destructions are come to a perpetual End, Psal. 9. 6. This Enemy in both these places spoken of is the Devil, who makes use of those two his Instruments, Sin and Death for to Destroy. So that conceive and put all this together, seeing that Sin, Satan and Death, are the Enemies of Mankind; And the Devil would fain, yea, He doth by the means of Sin and Death bring them at last into his Land, which is a Land of Darknes, of Dragons and Scorpions, where the shadow of Death and no Light is. And when He hath them there, He would keep them there, unless here again Almighty God, who is Greater in Power and Might, should cause them to return from this Land of the Enemy. VVhich He will do in the Resurrection, and only to such who shall be Accounted worthy to obtain that Resurrection. That will be Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth to Poor Mankind. But here again as for them, (as Hezekiah will be one of them) who shall be Accounted worthy to obtain this Resurrection, and to return again from this Land of the Enemy, The Lord God will wipe away Tears from off all their Faces. How so? By doing what is there aforesaid, He will swallow up Death in Victory, Isa. 25. 8. And as they have in the mean while the well grounded hope thereof, They may well refrain their Voice from Weeping and their Eyes from Tears.*

It is observed, that some constitutions are more subject and inclinable to weeping then others, as Children, Young People and VVomen are more apt and ready to it then

then Man of full Age ; and again, some are more inclinable to it then others, for in some Men it is evidently seen, that their heart is become like the nether Millstone, which nothing in the VWorld can make to shed Tears, or to really weep. But there is no Person living, who doth not sometimes Lye and Labour under the thing signified thereby, that is, Vexation, Grief, Pain and Sorrow, or in somewhat which is a Feeling and Resentment of Misery. And Tears or VWeeping, are but outward signs of expressing these forth. As VVaters, when they are deep, are most silent and make the least noise in running. So that sorrow of mind is then greatest, (like as fire when Pent in is most raging and violent) when it is kept in and not expressed forth in Tears and Weeping ; for it is felt and experienced, That an Ease and Mitigation thereof is had by sending forth of Tears and by the Voice of VWeeping. But when any one is under a Great deep and remediless Misery, and He is thoroughly knowing and sensible thereof, it is hard to refrain from Tears. VVe shall experience it so, *When the Ruin shall descend and the Flood come, and the winds blow and beat upon our Earthly House* In order to make it fall ; When dangerous Diteases and Death it self shall be upon us ; Or, when we shall be under deep Poverty, with the miserable train thereof, Hunger and Thirst, Cold and Nakedness, or in Imprisonment when one lies in a low, deep and dark Dungeon. Said *Jeremiah, I called upon thy Name, O Lord, out of the low Dungeon.*

Altho' People make now a Laughter or Jestings, of VWeeping and Tears, and some are so Puffed up that they think themselves above it, and as unbecoming them ; Yet if they did know and consider thoroughly on the other side, *That Fear, Pit and the Snare are upon them, ye Inhabitants of the Earth* ; And how it stands in the Nature of Things and their Establishment. And then let Man look thoroughly upon his own Frame and Constitution, his own Vileness (for we are here in *Vile Bodies*) VWeakness and Mortality, how he is Dust and Ashes walking up and down like a shadow, a little dependant Being, and much more there is to bring us into a Low Trembling and VWeeping condition ; for lay all this to

heart and it will appear, that VVeeping is much more becoming Man then Laughter. Nay, properly, and in Truth Laughter is as unbecoming Men and Women (whatever Fashion it be in amongst the Company of the VVorld) in this weak, imperfect, mortal and miserable condition here on Earth, who are liable to Death here and Damnation hereafter; As Laughter is not becoming any one in *Bedlam*, who is under Shackles and Fetters, and lies upon a Bed of Straw. For as the Poor Lunatick or Mad Person Laughs, because He knows not throughly his own miserable Imprisoned condition devoid of Reason. The same also is the very Reason of that Laughter now in use in the VVorld amongst Sinners, who are Children of the Devil (*He who committeth sin is of the Devil*) and the Servants of sin, for they are subject to Death here, and endless misery hereafter; but this last they know not or do not throughly consider of, and therefore it is, *That they spend their Days in Mirth, and in a moment go down to the Grave, and from thence to Hell.*

VVe may now hear one speaking from Heaven unto all the Inhabitants of the Earth, what He did once to the Daughters of *Jerusalem*, *Weep not for me, but for your selves*, who are in the VVilderness, which may be properly called, *Bochim*, A place of VVeeping, because of that manifold kind of Tribulation and Trouble ye meet with all in the VVorld, and yet ye will have more before ye come to my Kingdom. VVe should VVeep yet more especially for those sins which caused the Death of our Lord Christ, so as to turn all our VVeeping into Mourning for Sin, for this is to lay the Ax to the Root of the Tree. For Sin or Ignorance (which Ignorance is also a sin) is the Root and Antecedent cause of all Sorrow, Trouble, Affliction and Misery. *And I will pour upon the House of David and the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of Grace and Supplication; and they shall look upon me whom they have Pierced, and they shall Mourn for him, as one Mourneth for his only Son, and shall be in Bitterness for him, as one that is in Bitterness for his first Born,* Zech. 12. 10. Here we should turn all our Mourning, and Bitterness into Mourning and Bitterness for those very Sins, Iniquities and Transgressions, which Pierced the Lord



Lord of Life, which Crucified the Son of God and put him to an open shame.

As all things in this VWorld are full of mixture, as of Good and Evil, Joy and Sorrow, Prosperity and Adversity, Bitter and Sweet together. So sometimes may be observed and felt, even in Mourning and Outward Bitterness, some Inward Rejoycing and Sweetness intermingled therewith. Let not this seem strange, *For if in the midst of Laughter the heart is Sorrowful*, (this is experienced and there being the same and alike Reason for Contraries. Why may not the Heart be Joyful in the midst of VWeeping, and when the Eye is a trickling down Tears? This is only felt by the Godly and Devout Soul, upon her Exercising the Acts of true Contrition, and her Pouring forth Penitential Tears. O what Gladness and Sweetness is there sometimes in the midst thereof in the Inner Man, *When God makes the Bones that He hath broken to Rejoyce* (I my self have Experienced this inwardly) and according to his own Gracious Nature, VWord and Promise, doth *Revive the Spirit of the Humble, and doth Revive the Heart of the Contrite ones*, Isa. 57. 15. VWhereby that Scripture is fulfilled at this present time, *They that Sow in Tears, shall Reap in Joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing Precious Seed, shall doubtless come again with Rejoycing and Bringing his Sheaves with him*, Psal. 126. 5, 6. For by that Joy and Rejoycing which God doth give in the midst of, or Immediately after Tears and VWeeping, this is a Pledge, Earnest, Forerunner and Assurance before hand, that He will exceedingly much more and longer make good and fulfil this same his word hereafter. There is seen, yea, and sensibly perceived such a thing, as VWeeping sometimes for Joy. And as we know by our selves, that we have often many and several Reasons inducing us to do thus and thus, in one and the same thing. So besides the Reasons afore-alledged, I do assuredly gather from other Places of Scripture, This was the Principal Reason why *Hezekiah* wept sore, Namely, Through the abundance of Comfort, which upon Reflexion of his foregoing well spent Life, did thereupon flow and stream into his Soul. For such a True, Perfect and Good foregoing Life, (as sure as the Scriptures are true,

And

And the Work of Righteousness shall be Peace, and the effect of Righteousness, Quietness and Assurance for ever, Isa. 32. 17.) Must necessarily yield unto Hezekiah Consolation, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost. It is manifest that He did not weep sore, out of any Vexation or Repentance that He had led so Good a Life. In no wise. But rather at that very Instant, Joy did spring up unto him out of those Wells of Salvation, which if He had then died, He had went away to have more fully tasted on.

Another Reason which caused him to weep sore may hence proceed, even from his Great Earnestness He had then with God ; for in what Prayer He then made and directed unto him, He was very earnest and real therein, which made him to gush forth into Tears and Weeping. This is a frequent and common thing with the Saints and Servants of God, that when they are extraordinary and very earnest indeed with God about any thing, to Weep and Pour forth Tears before him, as we may Read several Examples hereof in Scripture. I shall instance but in one which is very pertinent to the present purpose, it is Written of Jacob, *That by his strength He had Power with God. Yea, He had Power over the Angel and Prevailed.* (How all this was done and effected, it may be seen by what is Immediately added further) *He wept and made Supplication,* Hof. 12. 3, 4. And herein Hezekiah shewed himself to be a true Son of Jacob, an Israelite indeed, for as appears from the Verses following my Text, He also got hereby Acceptation and Audience from God, *Go and say unto Hezekiah, Thus saith the Lord the God of David thy Father, I have heard thy Prayer, I have seen thy Tears.* So that He had some fruit and effect of his weeping sore, even all that He would have and desire for the Lord to grant his Request. It is very acceptable with God, and commonly gains the point when his Servants do weep before him in Prayer : Provided it be done, not in Hypocrisie, Dissimulation, pretence and outward shew ; but when it really arises from a broken and contrite Spirit (*The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit, a broken and contrite Heart, O God thou wilt not despise*) From a troubled Soul, and when it is under Great Earnestness, either to be de.

delivered from such an Evil which then lies upon her  
or to have such a Good thing which she then wants and  
desires.

The Scripture in sundry places speaks concerning Tears  
and Weeping, and it may be perceived, that the Direction  
and Tendency of all of them, is to recommend rather  
Weeping then Laughter unto us, for that tends to God  
and Rejoycing in the latter End. According to what the  
Wise Man saith, *It is better to go to the House of Mourning*  
*then to the House of Feasting, for that is the End of a*  
*Flesh, and the Living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow*  
*is better then Laughter, for by the sadness of the Countenance*  
*the Heart is made better,* Eccles. 7. 1, 2. Add to this what  
our Saviour Jesus Christ saith and promises, *Blessed are ye*  
*that hunger now, for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that*  
*weep now, for ye shall Laugh. Wo unto you that Laugh*  
*now, for ye shall Mourn and Weep,* Luke 6. 21, 25. Although  
the Practice of the World runs opposite and contrary, and  
they would Account such not fit to live, who do not give  
themselves out to Jocoseness, Merriment and Vain Laugh-  
ter; yet the Scripture by the which we are to be Judge  
and according to which all Men must receive, doth  
speak one Good Word of Worldly and Carnal Joy, which  
is like the *Crackling of Thorns under a Pot*; Making  
great Blase and Noise, and may a little scorch for a  
Time, but it yields not much Solid, Inward and Lasting  
heat, and it is all suddenly extinct and as nothing. But  
all our Joy and Delight should be in God, and in those  
things pertaining to his Kingdom, *In waiting for the Com-*  
*fortation of Israel,* and out of Expectation of what God  
will shortly do unto his Creatures, viz. That is to say,  
such of them as shall be found worthy to partake and re-  
ceive thereof. And (as aforesaid) all our Sorrow and  
Weeping, should be turned into Sorrow and Weeping  
for our sin, because we have sinned against the Lord, the  
Rebitation of Justice, the Hope of our Fathers. To re-  
solve with the same *Hezekiah*, after He was a little Reprieved  
and Lifted up again from his Bed of Sicknets, wherein  
he wept sore, yet He did retain the same Weeping State  
Inclination for all the Fifteen Years, which were added  
further, according to what himself saith, *I shall go forth*  
*from i*

upon her wants and all my Tears in the Bitterness of my Soul. Which Words are Written for our Admonition and Ensam- ple, for our Imitation and Practice, upon whom the Ends of the World are come, Namely, That each of us should severally go all our Remaining Years, Months, Weeks and Days, of this our Pilgrimage in the Bitterness of our Souls. And if we should also when we come to lie on our Death-Beds, *Weep sore*, Provided it be for the very same Reasons as *Hezekiah* did, It would be never the worse, but better for us.

Now with what kind of Use and Application shall I conclude the foregoing Sermons ?

The first Use shall be a short Word of Exhortation, Namely for all that shall hear or read these lines, *To walk before God in Truth and with a Perfect Heart, and to do that which is Good in his Sight.* How this may be done, hath been already shewed. My Business at present is to Exhort and Perswade People so to do. Have ye in the past time of your Lives walked before God in Truth, and with a perfect heart, and done that which is Good in his Sight ? Some have, and some have not. But this know, *God requireth that which is past*, Eccles. 3. 15. He will certainly call you to an Account, and Judge you for the past time of your Life. That is gone by and there is no recalling of it, yet the future course of your Life is somewhat more in your Power. Do ye therefore secure the Avenues, *Walk before God in the beginning of each Day, and all the Day long* ; And as ye do thus in the several Days, the residue of your Life that is to come will be True, Perfect and Good. *For it is not a vain thing weeping for you, Because it is your Life, and through this thing He shall prolong your Days in the Land, whither ye go To resolve Jordan to possess it*, Deut. 32. 47. It is not a vain or Indifferent thing in the first place to Hear or Read the Word of God, or not to do it. For all that never will be saved, will be saved by the Word of God. As Contrariwise, Destruction and Misery are threatned to those who refuse it, or turn their Backs from it, or who only give it the Hearing, but do not there-



thereafter. But *Moses* saith, *Set your hearts unto all the Words which I testify, because it is your Life*, Which is the nearest thing belonging to any one; for 'tis this which gives the resentment and feeling of all other things. And through this thing of walking before God in Truth, and with a perfect heart, and doing that which is Good in his sight, *Ye shall Prolong your Days*. It Prolonged *Hezekiah's* Days Fifteen Years more, and it will prolong your Days a longer space of duration than Fifteen Thousand, yea, Fifteen Millions of Years in the Land of Eternity, whither and when ye go over the *Jordan* of this Life to possess it.

The Heart and Conscience of every one must necessarily assent to the Truth of this following Proposition, Seeing that Man must live and abide for ever, (for so it is from the Order, Decree and Determination of God concerning us) He cannot do otherwise then desire to be happy for ever, when He goes over the *Jordan* of this Life, as well and all one as He desires and endeavours to live happily and comfortably in this Life, on this side of *Jordan*. Seeing that Man must live after Death, He must all one, and also doth desire to be Happy and Blessed after Death, all one as it is Natural and every one doth desire to live Comfortably, Pleasantly and Happily before Death. And seeing again from the Order, Decree and Determination of God, There is no other way under Heaven to be Happy and Blessed for ever, but walking before God in Truth and with a Perfect Heart, and by doing that which is Good in his sight throughout all our remaining Life: Hereupon the Word of Exhortation speaks most strong and forcible to every one that would be saved and happy for ever (as every one would who knows and believes his future State) *Go thou and do likewise*. What I say to thee, I say again to all, *Go thou and do likewise*, Even to walk before the Invisible God in Truth, and with a Perfect Heart, and to do that which is Good in his sight, all the remaining Days thou walkest, movest and breathest on this Earth. If you do but attend

unto, and understand throughly that Reasoning and Truth which lies in this consideration; It will appear to be the most Strong and Powerful Argument in the World for to Perswade Men.

The other Use which I shall draw and infer from these last words of our Text, *And Hezekiah wept sore*, shall be, To Recommend unto those who are in Reality and Truth obedient Servants of the Lord, to be in a State of Weeping and Mourning. Say I these things as a Man? For doth not the Law of the Prophets Recommend and say the very same unto ye? *Therefore also now saith the Lord, Turn ye even to me with all your Heart and with Fasting* (the intent whereof is to afflict our Soul, Isa. 58. 3.) *And with Weeping and with Mourning. Let the Bridegroom go forth of his Chamber, and the Bride out of her Closet. Let the Priests, the Ministers of the Lord, Weep between the Porch and the Altar; and let them say, Spare thy People O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, Joel. 2. 12, 13, 14, 17. And in that Day did the Lord God of Hosts call to Weeping and to Mourning, and to Girding with Sack-cloth.* (Little of this is obeyed and observed in this Generation and Countrey of ours, but herein is fulfilled what is next Written) *And behold Joy and Gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating Flesh and Drinking Wine: Let us Eat and Drink for to Morrow we shall die. And it was revealed in mine Ears by the Lord of Hosts; surely this Iniquity shall not be Purged from ye, until ye die saith the Lord God of Hosts, Isa. 22. 12, 13, 14.*

But here it may be surmised and said, That such kind of harsh and sowre Doctrine may be Reasonably expected from the Old Testament Dispensation, which came from Mount Sinah which gendreth Bondage; from whence the Law was given in Fire, in Blackness and Darkness, and Tempest of Thunder and Lightning. But the Gospel was not ushered nor brought into the World after that manner, for it came in a still Voice, with a Fear not, for behold I bring you Good Tidings of Great Joy which shall be to all People, Luke 2. 10. Doth this same Gospel Recommend, or say any thing con-

cerning this State of Weeping and Mourning? For if it should, How would it then bring us Good Tidings of Great Joy, which shall be unto all People? Yes, assuredly it doth both; but herein is Comprised the *Mystery of God*, That the Weeping and Mourning must go before the Joy, which is to be manifested in us, and had by us. Saith the Apostle James, who spake by a true Gospel Spirit, *Be Afflicted, and Mourn and Weep: Let your Laughter be turned to Mourning, and your Joy to Heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of God, and He shall lift you up,* James 4. 9, 10. And then by consequence if we do all this, *The Lord who shall turn our Captivity as the Rivers in the South*, will again turn our Mourning to Laughter, and our Heaviness to Joy. According as is promised by his Spirit, which spake through the Evangelical Prophet, *And the Ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with Songs; They shall obtain Joy and Gladness, and Sorrow and Sighing shall flee away,* Isa. 35. 10. Our Saviour Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, (in whom all the Gospel doth center) doth assure and promise the same in those afore-quoted words of his, wherein also He doth Recommend to all that are Christians indeed, this State of Weeping now, with that true Word of Encouragement, *for ye shall Laugh*. As also He tacitly finds fault with, and threatens where People Laugh now, *for they shall Mourn and Weep*. So that the way to Happiness hereafter, is, by Mourning and Weeping here. As again, Laughter and Merriment now (I only speak here of the Laughter and Merriment of the World, which arises from the things thereof) is the way to misery hereafter. *Behold, in this Gods Thoughts are not as Mans Thoughts*; For herein they are contrary to the Thoughts of the People of the World, who if they see any one to serious and Godly, herein they conclude him to be Melancholy and Miserable; whereas as sure as Gods Word is true, this is the only way to the true Blessedness. But contrariwise it is, as to the Merry Men of the World, for in the Judgment and Estimation of God, if we take a view of

them

them by the Glass of his Word, and go into the sanctuary and see the end of these Men, *Surely thou didst set them in slippery Places, Thou castedst them down into Destruction*, Psal. 73. 18. As the pleasant and purling streams of *Jordan*, do empty themselves into the Dead Sea ; So all their sinful Mirth and Laughter will End and Terminate in endless Howlings.

Seeing that these things are so, What manner of Persons ought we to be in all Gravity of Spirit and Serious Conversation ? Even with the same *Hezekiah*, *Like a Crane or a Swallow, so did I chatter, I did Mourn as a Dove*, Isa. 38. 14. For as to this, the Sweet Word of Promise speaks on this wise, *And the Days of thy Mourning shall be ended*, Isa. 60. 20. Which again (according as our Mourning hath been) will be made up in a Proportionable Cup of Consolation and Rejoycing. And tho' as afore-observed of some Constitutions, that they cannot Weep, or shed Tears : So here it may be, when People are in Health, Wealth and Prosperity, when they have the World at will, as we commonly Phrase and Understand it, and all things are smooth and easy with them, *When their Eyes stand out with Fatness, they have more then heart could wish*, Psal. 73. 7. When they are Puffed up with sensuality and the Good Things of this Life, then indeed they cannot so easily be in a State of Weeping and Mourning. But here again, as it was commanded in Old Time, that they should not come near their Wives, when they were in their solemn times of approaching and drawing near unto the Lord God. And as now under the Gospel, the Apostle delivereth the Rule unto Husbands and Wives, *Defraud ye not one the other except it be with consent for a Time, that ye may give your selves unto Fasting and Prayer*. So in like manner it may be Reasoned and Inferred, That we should sometimes abridge and deny our selves, even the Lawful Comforts and Enjoyments of Life, that we may the more afflict our Souls, and so come to be in a due Posture and Frame, for a State of Weeping and Mourning.

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# SERMON V.

Isaiah XXXVIII. 4, 5.

*Then came the Word of the Lord unto Isaiah, saying, Go and Say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy Father, I have heard thy Prayer, I have seen thy Tears ; Behold, I will add unto thy Days Fifteen Tears.*

**I**F we consider thoroughly and Weigh fully in our Minds these three following Scriptures, *Thus saith the Lord, Let not the Wise Man Glory in his Wisdom, neither let the Mighty Man Glory in his Might, let not the Rich Man Glory in his Riches. But let him that Glorieth, Glory in this, that he Understandeth and knoweth me that I am the Lord,* Jer. 9. 23. 24. *For what Nation is there so Great who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all Things, that we call upon him for,* Deut. 4. 7. *And Jesus lift up his Eyes and said, Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I know that thou hearest me always,* John 11. 41, 42. Put and conceive all this together, and it will hence appear that the Greatest Priviledge, Honour and Excellency, and Benefit, which can accrue to any Man on this Earth is for God to hear his Prayer, To be nigh unto him in all things that he Calls upon God for ; and herein the Righteous and so any one is *more excellent then his Neighbour,* according as he knows, and understands more of the

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Lord

Lord God. We see evidently now, that some do Account of and set by themselves, because they *Joyn House to House*, and lay *Field to Field*, and because they Wax Rich and abound therein. Who, because they are Purse Proud and have more Money than such and such of their Neighbours and Acquaintance, their hearts are not only lifted up above their Brethren, but, I had almost said, above the Lord their God also. For, forsooth, they refuse and disdain, and are ashamed to come to the place of his worship and of hearing his word, for the Plainness and Simplicity thereof; and because that only some few Poor People do come there. *Have any of the Rulers believed on him?* So it hath been alike asked more than once or twice, by some of my Carnal Kindred who walk in the Vanity of their mind, having their Understanding darkened as to the things of God, and as to the true method of the Dispensation of his Kingdom, Do any of the substantial and Rich sort of the People come to hear thee? I cannot Answer as to any of them, but if any of the *Poor of the Flock*, or those Poor despised ones in the world, whose Prayer God heareth (*Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy one to him whom Man despiseth, to him whom the Nation abhorreth*, Isaiah 49. 7.) Do come here to this Assembly, it is more to me (as I consider these things when I go into the sanctuary and take a View and Estimate thereof from out of the Glass of the word) than if Kings and Princes, Lords and Ladies, or other Rich and Honourable Men and Women, did come to hear me Preach the Word; Tho' Peradventure that would lift up and exalt, and please that Worldly Corrupt Nature which I confess and speak to my shame, is yet too much in me. Some do Account themselves very much, because, perhaps they are beloved of, or Popular amongst their Neighbours, another for his Honour, another for his Courage and Might, and because by such an one, *The Lord hath given Deliverance from the Syrians*, or for his having wrought Great Achievements. Another perhaps is lifted up in Soul, because of the Gifts that are given him, and the word of wisdom committed unto him (which is the most Valuable of

all the Priviledges of Mankind, but here it is alleviated again with this consideration, that where are Great Gifts, there must be Great Accounts.) Another is Delighted and Transported within himself, because he hath a Wife and Children to his Mind, or because he hath some other Worldly Blessing. And so one is lifted up for one thing, another for another, if we did run throughout the several Particulars among the Children of Men. But all these and such like, are but light and small things in Comparison of the great things of Eternity, and the exceeding and *Eternal Weight of Glory*. As God said unto Solomon, *Because thou hast asked this thing and hast not asked for thy self long Life, neither hast asked Riches for thy self, neither hast asked the Life of thine Enemies, but hast asked for thy self Understanding to discern Judgment.* Behold, I have done according to thy Words; Lo, I have given thee a Wife and Understanding heart. So that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given that which thou hast not asked, both Riches and Honour, so that there shall not be any among the Kings like unto thee all thy Days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways to keep my Statutes and my Commandments, as thy Father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy Days, 1 Kings 3. 11, 12, 13, 14. And as it is written, *For your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you,* Mat. 6. 33. From all this put together, it is my inward and very thought; As I behold and observe how Men differ from one another, and one Prides himself in this thing, another in that, whereas none should be Proud for any thing which he hath, but be humble and thankful for each distinguishing blessing or mercy received. As it is Written, *But to the Saints that are in the Earth, and to the excellent* (Mark that word *excellent*) *in whom is all my delight.* And as there is one Glory of the Sun, and another Glory of the Moon, and another Glory of the Stars; for one Star differeth from another Star in Glory. So each Man or Woman doth excell or differ from one another in Glory or real worth, accord-



ing as they know and understand, and have more of the Mind of God. All your excellency is of me, saith the Lord, and derived from him. And as long as we walk and breath a little longer on this Earth ; The more any one is in favour with God and hath more of his will and secret (*The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.*) Herein only one Man excelleth another, or differeth from, and exceedeth such an one in real worth. That Courtier who can soonest obtain a favour from his King or Prince, he is the best Courtier : So amongst the vast Number of we Fellow Creatures on Earth, altho' there is no difference between the Flesh of a Saint or of a Sinner ; for our flesh is as their flesh, and our Children as their Children, and we are all near the same (both Godly and Ungodly) as to the same outward Frame, and Composure. But that is the best Man or Woman, who hath most interest now in the Court of Heaven ; who even whilst here on Earth is soonest heard by the Great King, for this is an Earnest and Assurance before-hand, that he shall one day stand in his Presence ; Who is an Israelite indeed, a true Son of Jacob, *Hath Power with God ; Yea, he had Power over the Angel and Prevailed,* Hosea 13. 3, 4. *As a Prince, hast thou Power with God ; and with Men, and hast Prevailed,* Gen. 32. 28. Who like another Lot, hath that Interest and Prevalency with God, that himself saith, *I cannot do anything till thou comest hither,* Gen. 19. 22, Altho' it were to be in the Destruction and Punishment of the wicked, yet God could not do it till he came out from amongst them. And so he speaks on that wise to his Servant Moses, *Let me alone,* (that is, Do not Pray, or Interceed for them) that I may consume this People in a moment. Or like another Elias, who was a Man subject to like Passions as we are, *And he Prayed earnestly that it might not Rain, and it Rained not on the Earth by the space of Three Years and Six Months. And He prayed again, and the Heaven gave Rain, and the Earth brought forth her Fruit,* James 5. 17, 19. Who is here brought in as an Example, that the effectual fervent Prayer of a Righteous Man availeth much : Who, when God heareth not sinners, but if any be a Worshipper of God and doth

his Will, him he heareth, hath this Testimony, that he is a VVorshipper of God and doth his VVill, because that God heareth his Prayer. If I regard Iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. *But verily God hath heard me, he hath attended to the Voice of my Prayer,* Psal. 66. 18, 19. By which it follows of Consequence, that the Psalmist did not regard Iniquity in his heart : For God to be nigh unto us in all things, that we call upon him for and to hear our Prayer, is the greatest of all Wordly Blessings and Mercies put together, either long Life, Riches, or what we would have in this World ; for if God hears our Prayer, then we shall have, what we would have in the next world, which is much better and more enduring.

*Go and say to Hezekiah, thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy Father.* This and the foregoing Verses are a kind of Dialogue between the Great God and his Creature *Hezekiah* ; which Dialogue or Conference God manages by his Prophet *Isaiah*. That God should hearken unto the Voice of a Man, *Joshua* 10. 4. Seems wonderful if we have but those just and raised thoughts of the God-head, (in Comparison of whom in Greatness or Bigness the vast Fabrick of the whole World, is but as a Dust of the Ballance) and the true Knowledge of our selves. But yet the Lord who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in Heaven and in Earth, is pleased to keep a care over, and a Communication with his Creatures. The whole Scripture is but a Declaration in order of what hath passed and been transacted between God and Mankind, in the several Persons there instanced in. The whole and sum of which may be conceived to be this, their Creation at first, their Preservation throughout this World, and what things are in order to their salvation in the next World. The first Part hereof is signified by that kind of speech so often used, *Thus saith the Lord that formed thee, or the Lord thy Maker* ; And here the same Lord, who turneth Man to Destruction, saith again, *Return ye Children of Men* : For after that he had in the foregoing Verses (whereof ye have already heard it Discoursed abundantly.) Sent a message of Death, in our next word he sends a Reprieve from this Sentence, or a

lengthening of his Temporal Life Fifteen Years longer, Whereby is shewn forth, that as himself is the Lord and Author of Life, who first gave it ; So he can cut it off, and Determine it whensoever he will, or lengthen and continue it out to what Space or Duration he thinks fit ; as also this adding of Fifteen Years, is a Type and Signification of that adding of Life for evermore unto that which is now as a vapour and continueth not ; but as soon as this shall end, that will immediately begin and never end, as may appear yet more clearly from the sequel and drift of our Discourse hereon.

*The God of David thy Father.* As our Saviour Jesus Christ proves the Resurrection of the Dead, *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the Dead but of the Living.* So he is fitly stiled, *the God of David thy Father.* For he, that is, his Soul was then also living unto, or in Respect of God, and thereupon a Promise of further Continuance of Life is Properly Grounded and made unto one of his Grand-Children, even *Hezekiah.* As God hath said, *I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be my People.* 2. Cor. 6. 16. Here is a Limitation and Annexing to these Words of his Covenant. *I will be their God.* He is never said to be the God of *Saul, Abah,* or of such as were Wicked, Disobedient and Ungodly, but the God of the Patriarchs, and of *David,* who were all his Servants and did walk before him as Obedient Children. At first he is the God of all Created Beings. He calleth them all by Names ; But afterwards as he beholds Sin and Evil he Disowns and casts off that Title, *Depart from me ye that Work Iniquity.* The Use whereof may be this to each and every one of us, Namely, to be sure to get within the Covenant. As *Thomas* said to Jesus Christ, *My Lord and my God,* so if we can say Truly as to the Great God who made the World, *My Lord and my God.* For if it is so, we shall be both Partakers of his Blessedness, and also of his Holiness. Hereby also may be seen and perceived the Great Blessing, advantage and Priviledge of being descended from Godly Parents or Ancestors. For as to

this, the Gracious Word of promise speaketh on this  
Wife, *And shewing Mercy unto Thousands of them that  
Love me and keep my Comandments.*

And without all doubt it fared the better with  
*Hezekiah* here, for the Godliness of *David* his Grand-  
Father or more Properly his Forefather, for there  
were more than three Generations or Descents between  
*David* and *Hezekiah*. We read Several Times in the  
Books of Kings and Chronicles, that a Blessing was entail-  
ed on his Posterity for *David's* sake; and where some  
of his Children or rather descendants did not walk in  
Gods Covenant, nor keep his Statutes, nevertheless  
God would not cut them off quite nor destroy them  
utterly, Because of the Loving Kindness and Mercy,  
which he still retained unto *David* their Forefather;  
as there are Sundry Expressions to this purpose in the  
Scripture. Besides that there was somewhat in *Hezeki-  
ah* himself which God liked and was well pleased with-  
all. Yet he liked him so much the better and was more  
pleased with him because of *David* his Father. As ap-  
pears here by stiling himself the God of *David* his Fa-  
ther, When he acquaints *Hezekiah* of hearing his Pray-  
er, and that he would do such a Good Thing for him.  
There is not a Word in Scripture but what is Observa-  
ble, and somewhat may be gathered and drawn from  
thence of the Mind of God. Hereby may be seen that  
God had a kindness and Favour unto the House and  
Family of *David*, as indeed he had to that and to the  
Family and House of *Abraham*, and of *Jacob* or *Israel*.  
There are more Good Things said throughout the Book  
of the Lord of them, than of all the Families of the Earth  
besides. But therefore chiefly it was, because of what  
was aforesaid to *Abraham*, *In thy seed shall all the Na-  
tions of the Earth be Blessed*, and of this Mans seed, and  
so of *Jacob* and of *David's* seed (To shew which the  
Genealogy of him is so Particularly reckoned up in  
the first Chapter of *Mathew*) according to the Flesh,  
God would raise up his Son Jesus Christ. And there-  
fore this Diversity may be now observed under the  
Gospel, that, unless when it is Quoted out of the Old  
Testament, he is never called the God of *Abraham*, or



of *Isaac* and *Jacob* nor yet the God of *David*, but there he is stiled and Named the God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, according as so *Paul* calls him by the Spirit.

As our Saviour *Jesus Christ* argues to the Jews, *If ye were the Children of Abraham ye would do the Works of Abraham*, so here in like manner it may be Reasoned, that if the Lord was the God of *David* thy Father, so he would be the God of *Hezekiah* also one of his Posterity; Provided always, and as long as he did the works of *David* his Fore-father. And as God did preserve *David*, from many Perils and Dangers, so the same God would preserve *Hezekiah* also from the Danger of Pining Sickness, and give him as it were a new Life and Health springing from out of it as the day doth succeed the Darknes of Night. Where God saith a Thing, he doth always perform the same, which accordingly he did make Good and fulfil unto the same *Hezekiah*, as appears by the History thereof as it stands recorded in Several Places of the Bible.

*I have heard thy Prayer, I have seen thy Tears.* As concerning Gods hearing our Prayes, the sum of that matter is, *That God will be Sanctified by all them that draw near unto him.* The Worshipper is not to Regard Iniquity in his Heart, but to call upon the Lord with his whole heart and then the Lord will hear our Prayer and be found by us. *Be ye clean that bear the Vessels of the Lord*, Isa. 52. 11. And so it is requisite to be cleansed from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit in order that our Prayers may ascend up, and be accepted with and Granted by the most high God. Therefore it was, because that *Hezekiah* had walked before God in Truth (For *the Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him in Truth*) and with a Perfect Heart which is a whole and not a divided heart; Therefore it was that the Lord heard his Prayer.

*I have seen thy Tears.* It commonly gains the Point or obtains the thing Requested for, when the People and Servants of God do shed Tears in Prayer; if this be done not in Hypocrisie, or Dissimulation, but out of great Earnestness and Reality of Soul; the Truth whereof is here fulfilled; for therefore it was that God heard his his Prayer, and saw his Tears. Though we

but there our Lord the Spirit. ws, If ye Works of reason, rather, so his Post- e did the God did the ngers, so from the it were a it as the here God e, which the same it stands  
 As con- matter is, near unto ity in his is whole er and be els of the oe clearl order that with and was, be ruth (For urth) and t a divid- is Prayer. the Point eople and t this be ut out of ne Truth that God ough we Cret-

Creatures do not see God, yet God seeth we Crea-  
 tures, and knows how it is with us. *The Eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their Meats in due Season.* And there doth arise a little Anguish, and great Thought and Searching of Heart in the Reasonable Creature, who have also Eyes in their Understanding, as well as Outward Bodily Eyes, Why, They cannot see God. Why, in this Life, and in this State here on Earth, *No Man hath seen God at any Time, the only begotten Son which is in the Bosom of the Father he hath declared him.* And so the Son, who is the Word; And the word Preached or Spoken doth declare God, that is, make him to be Conceived or Understood. Though we do not see God, yet we see his Works, which we cannot so much as look without doors but we behold them. For tis his Heavens which he Created, and his Earth which we tread on. By which together with that Invisible Reason and Knowledge which he hath given us, *The Invisible Things of him from the Creation of the World may be clearly seen being Understood by the Things that are made, even his Eternal Power and God-Head.* So that though we cannot see God as yet, with this Outward Bodily Eye of ours, yet with the Eye of Faith or with the Eyes of our Understanding being Enlightened we may see him that is Invisible. And so after our Spirits are Dislodged from these Bodies we shall see him Face to Face and know him as we are known, as he knoweth us and we now know one another. Certain it is that his Eyes are upon all the ways of the Children of Men to Recom- pence to every one accordingly whether they be Good or Evil; And so he sees and beholds whatever we do, whether we Laugh or Mourn, are Merry or Sad. *I have seen thy Tears.* As our Lord did argue to the Pharisee, *Ye Fools, Did not He that made that which is without, make that which is within also.* In like manner it may be truly reasoned, He who sees that which is without, sees that which is within also. And so the same God, who sees our outward Tears, sees also that Sorrow of Heart and Vexation of Spirit, that secret Anguish and Discontent of Mind, from whence these Tears

Tears do flow forth and proceed. He sees every leaky cranny and corner of our Inside also, and seeing that it is the will and appointment of God, *To comfort all that mourn, to appoint unto them that mourn in Sion, to give unto them Beauty for Ashes, the Oyl of Joy for Mourning, the Garment of Praise for the Spirit of Heaviness.* Here God is like unto a skilful Phyfician (Shall not he that teacheth Man Knowledge, know?) Who knoweth the bottom and ground of the Sore or Disease, which he hath in hand to heal and recover. Even so our God knows and understands to the utmost, all that Mourning and Spirit of Heaviness, with the true causes and occasions thereof, that is in the hearts of all, or any of the Children of Men; which is necessary in order to Administer Comfort, Joy and Relief to it. The trouble of the Spirit and the restless Spirit, the groaning Spirit and the dissatisfied Spirit, or whatever doth afflict, is painful or irksome; all couched and comprehended under that one word, *the Spirit of Heaviness*: All these, and whatever is more, or such like, is Known to God, the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Consolation. Saith the Psalmist, *Put thou my Tears into thy Bottle. Are not these things Noted in thy Book? I am weary with my Groaning, all the Night make I my Bed to Swim, I wash my Couch with my Tears,* Plal. 6. 6. And then it follows *For the Lord hath heard the Voice of my Weeping.* Which is Parallel unto and is another Example to confirm the Truth of our Text, *That God doth see the Tears and hear the Voice of the Weeping of his Servants and People.* According to what is elsewhere Written, *I cried unto God with my Voice, even unto God with my Voice, and he gave Ear unto me.* For this is to be understood and intended unto, that as in one sense God hears the Labour of the formal Half-Christian, or of the Wicked and Ungodly; for they do sometimes in custom and little to satisfy Natural Conscience, Pray unto him. And so he doth hear the mumbling of the Papist over his Beads, the much speaking of the Heathen, and the Worship of the Jew, as it is at this Day, as He is all knowing; for there is not a word in my Tongue, but thou O Lord, knowest it altogether. And so he hears

their Devotion as we do the humming and noise of a  
 flye, which we are forced to hear, but we do not Mind  
 or Regard. But he doth not hear the sinful or false  
 Worshippers in such wise, as they are not to think that  
 they shall receive any thing from the Lord. But in  
 Scripture sence, when God hears the Prayer of his cho-  
 sen People and Servants ; He doth fulfil their Petitions  
 and give and grant unto them, what they Pray unto him  
 for. In like manner God doth see the Tears of such a  
 Profane Person as *Esau*, as he doth see all things : And  
 so he doth hear the howlings of them upon their Beds,  
*Who did not cry unto him with their heart*, Hos. 7. 14. But  
 yet he is not so far moved with one or the other, as to  
 admit the one to Repentance, or Vouchsafe a Pardon to  
 the other. According as he saith and declareth else-  
 where, *Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone,*  
*lest they should hear the Law and the Prophets, which*  
*the Lord of Hosts had sent in his Spirit by the former Pro-*  
*phets. Therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of*  
*Hosts. Therefore it came to pass, that as he cried and*  
*they would not hear, so they cried and I would not hear,*  
*saith the Lord of Hosts*, Zech. 7. 12, 13. Such did here-  
 fore harden themselves against God, and now God  
 will harden himself against them, altho' they are his  
 Creatures and the work of his own hands. And so the  
 same God, tho' in his Love and Pity to Poor Mankind,  
 hath redeemed them ; That is, like setting up one again  
 after they had been broke or Bank-rupt ; and tho' he  
 is very Pitiful and of tender Mercy, which is over all  
 his works. But yet those Souls who shall fall under his  
 Severity and Vengeance, and shall be cast into Hell, He  
 will be hardened against their Wailing and Weeping,  
 and Gnashing of Teeth, altho' it should be for ever.  
 And the same Lord Jesus Christ, who is now our Adve-  
 cate with the Father, and in this Life holds forth even  
 unto them the Scepter of Mercy, will be to the hard  
 and impenitent in heart, who despise his Goodness, long-  
 suffering and forbearance, an Inexorable Judge. But  
 according to the meaning and intent of the Holy  
 Ghost here in our Text, when God sees our Tears and  
 hears the Voice of our Weeping, it is, when God takes  
 away



away and removes that Evil and Afflicting thing from us, for which we weep and shed Tears, according to what is elsewhere written, *He will swallow up Death in Victory, and the Lord God will wipe away Tears from all Faces.* Tears do most commonly arise from the Apprehension of this thing of Death. So it did with *Hezekiah*, as hath been abundantly shewed in the foregoing Discourses : And so it doth with most of the Children of Men, who know and understand somewhat more concerning it, either what may bring Death on, or sooner hasten it, this doth usually raise and occasion Tears, or at least that inward Sorrow and Anguish of Heart, which Tears are the outward sign and effect of. And as the Word of Consolation here goes to the very Ground and Original cause of those Tears, *He shall swallow up Death in Victory*; That is, God will overcome Death and cause it to cease to be, So that those very same Creatures shall come forth into Life again, upon whom Death had seized and done its utmost. After Death hath devoured and destroyed them, God will raise them up and restore them intire and whole again, and he will save them from the Destruction; of necessary Consequence then, those Tears must be wiped away which did arise only by Reason of Death. All one as the Cutting of his Days, and his Sense and Apprehension of his going to the Gates of the Grave, and of being Deprived of the residue of his Years, made *Hezekiah* to weep sore. But after that God had seen those his Tears, and sent another different message of adding Fifteen Years more, this instantly made him to cease and refrain from Tears, as appears and may be manifestly gathered from the following Part of the same Chapter. *Behold, for Peace I had Great Bitterness* (which kind of Expression seems as the Sun Shining yet greater Brightness, after it hath come out from a Dark Cloud.) *But thou hast in Love to my Soul delivered it from the Pit of Corruption, for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back; The Living he shall Praise thee. I do this Day. The Lord was ready to save me, therefore we will Sing my Songs to the stringed Instruments all the Days of our Life in the House of the Lord.* Here his

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mer weeping sore, and his Tears are turned into Praise and Songs: And so it will be with the Souls of all those that shall be saved in the Great Day of the Resurrection and Restitution of all things, and from thenceforth throughout all Eternity ; Nothing but Praise and Songs will be heard amongst them, Notwithstanding all the Sorrow and Fear, Trouble and Weeping, as they passed through this Vale of Life. And this will be in the House of the Lord, in the highest Heavens for ever and more ; which may be called the Presence Chamber of the Great King, as all the World is his Pallace, House, or Temple. *The Redeemed shall walk there, and the Ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with Songs, and Everlasting Joy upon their Heads. They shall obtain Joy and Gladness, and Sorrow and Sighing shall flee away.*

What I say unto you, I say unto you all, VVatch. And as God is no Respector of Persons, but in every Nation he that Feareth him and Worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him. And as the God of *Abraham* is the same and alike unto all who do the Works of *Abraham*, so the same God, who saw *Hezekiah's* Tears will see our Tears also, provided we be in Covenant with him as *Hezekiah* was ; and they be upon the same Account and only for the like Reason as his were. Truly, my Beloved Brethren, It is a Great Matter and a very Desirable Thing to be under the care and concern of God, to be one of them of whom he saith, *I have written thee upon the Palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me.* For here again God hath common care and providence over all his Creatures, both Men and the Fowls of the Air as they are the Work of his hands ; But then besides that he hath an especial and Peculiar care over his own Peculiar People and Redeemed Ones. Like as he gives Common Knowledge unto almost all Men and Women, but the saving and Distinguishing Grace unto his Elect. And as it is written, *All thy Works shall Praise thee O Lord, and thy Saints shall Bless thee.* Psal. 145. 10. Even the Inanimate Works do Praise God although they cannot speak forth, but they Praise God as they are standing and re-

maining Monuments of his Praise, in that he made and Created them. But the Saints Blessing God importeth speaking forth with a living Voice. And this Blessing God doth again seem to import somewhat more and further than that Praise which the Heavens, or the Part of the Creation of God which is without Life, do shew. So certainly there is somewhat more and further in the Saints Blessing God, than that Praise of his Name which is outwardly rendred by the Mixt Multitude or common sort of Mankind. *Remember me, O Lord with the Favour that thou bearest unto thy People, and visit me with thy Salvation.* Psal. 106. 4. Here the Psalmist knows by the Spirit, and accordingly he Prays and Addresseth unto God as such for the Distinguishing Favour and Salvation which he hath for his own People, over what he hath for the common stock of Mankind. And this will more Eminently, Illustriously and Remarkably appear at the End of all Things, where some shall be saved, and the Saints which now bless God shall be made Blessed by him; and the other sort that shall be Condemned, Perish and be made Miserable. Reprobate Silver shall Men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.

The Lord seeing our Tears will Administer Consolation, because here it will be found true ( an Example whereof was *Hezekiah* ) They that sow in Tears, shall reap in Joy. So again, from the Lords seeing the Vanities and Sportings of some of the Children of Men should ( I do not say, it doth, because most have no Sense and Apprehension thereof ) yield and afford grief unto them, because that the more Carnal Joy People have in this Life, the more Eternal Sorrow they will have after this Life is Ended. Wo unto you that Laugh now, for ye shall Mourn and Weep. But it is a Pitiful and Miserable thing to be despised and not regarded by God, which is to be a foretorn wretch and cast off by our Maker, *To be cast out of thy sight,* Jonah 7. 4. As *Jonah* complained and feared, he should when he was in the Whales Belly; which yet he was there, altho' many others are out of Gods sight in the sense even when they breath, move and live on the Earth.

Earth ; But he quite gives them over as a Father doth  
 Continued Provoking and Disobedient Child. But  
 if any of us should be disowned by and separated from  
 God our Creatour and Preserver, as he will do so by a  
 great many at the last Day, Depart from me, *I never*  
*new ye, ye Workers of Iniquity*, Alas ! What Despicable  
 and Vile Beings should we be ? Who thereupon must  
 necessarily fall down and sink into Misery, as the Bo-  
 dy, when the Soul is out of it, sinks and turns into  
 Corruption and Dissolution : Even so the Soul or whole  
 Man without God, will be nothing else but Restless  
 People, and Tormented.

Here the As the Danger and Misery is very great, yea unexpre-  
 the Praile sible to be without God, so is the Benefit and Happi-  
 nguishin nels as great on the other side, yea to be greatly desir-  
 own Pe and sought after, to have God Propitious, Favour-  
 of Ma ble, and nigh unto us in all Things that we call upon  
 iously him for. If we once have God for our Friend, then we  
 gs, who have him who possesseth all Things, and what can that  
 blefs Soul want ? As was afore said, If God hears our Pray-  
 fort that here on Earth, this is an earnest and assurance before  
 ble. Re and that we shall one day stand in his presence in the  
 the Lon Highest Heavens, so it is here again, If the Lord sees  
 our Tears and hears the Voice of our Weeping in these  
 Confol Days of our Flesh when it is upon the very same ac-  
 Exam pount as *Hezekiah's* and the Psalmits was (for the ble-  
 ears, shing and advantage belongs not unto Wordly sorrow  
 ng the v which Worketh Death, but Godly sorrow which Worketh  
 n of M Repentance to Salvation not to be Repented of) so the  
 havenet sorrow towards God Worketh and Effecteth it so for  
 nd affor that we shall come into be Partakers of the Conso-  
 Carnal Jo lation, even the Consolation of *Israel*. I say, this also  
 orrow the an earnest and assurance before-hand, that when these  
 o you the Days of our flesh are Ended, *The Days of our Mourn-*  
 But it is g shall be Ended, *Isa. 60. 20.* And we shall come to  
 nd not at place where it shall be said, Behold, the Taberna-  
 vretch an cle of God is with Men, and he will dwell with them,  
 ght, Jon and they shall be his People, and God himself shall be their  
 should God. And God shall wipe away all Tears from their  
 he was eyes, and there shall be no more Death, ( Mark here  
 ght in the gain how fitly this is put in the first place, for all Tears  
 ve on the and  
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and the things next named are by Reason of Death *neither Sorrow, nor Crying, neither shall there be any more Pain for the former things are passed away.* Rev. 21. 3.

As one Scripture saith, Wo unto us for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the Evening are stretched out. *Jer. 6. 4.* And hereupon Anguish ariseth in our heart, and our Eyes are ready to burst forth into Tears because we must severally, yea we shall shortly Taste Death. Do ye know what kind of Taste it is? It is *terrenesse*, for so we conceive it and *Agag* truly Phrased it. And we have every one of us, (yea the non hearers of the Word also, for God hath shewed and made known as much unto them) received the Message and Word of Command from the Lord of Life, who hath put and now holds our Souls in Life and can call them out again whensoever he will, Set your Houses, your Souls, the Inhabitants of your Earthly House in order for ye shall die. If it was this Night that our Souls should be required of us we should Fear, yea we should be apt to weep sore also; Here again God would revive us if God did see our Tears and say to each of us, Behold, I will add unto thy days Fifty Years.

Some in this assembly may Probably live Fifty Years longer, some Thirty, Forty, Fifty, together with the odd Years, Months and Days, according as to each his Time is appointed and his days upon Earth are limited that of an Hireling. And so if I should Dogmatically affirm and Preach, set your Souls in order for ye shall die, that is, very suddenly and quickly, either this Evening, to Morrow, or this week at furthest, I have no warrant so to say. Several of ye may hear and perceive the Decree and Sentence of God otherwise. Behold I will add unto thy Temporal Life, so many Years, Months, Weeks and Days more, as it is known in the Purpose and Mind of God concerning each of us, though it is Uncertain and Unknown to every one of us, therefore ye would not give much heed unto nor believe such a Doctrine of Mine that should acquaint ye, that ye should die within a week or such a little Time. But if I should teach and affirm constantly

ly as I do this day, Set your Houses in order ; For ye  
 shall most certainly die one time or another, this ye  
 must Necessarily assent unto. And also this ye cannot  
 do otherwise than assent unto, that the few and Evil  
 Days remaining of your Pilgrimage will run out and  
 Elapse, as the former days of your Life are gone, Van-  
 ished and passed by already. As suppose a Man  
 should live to Fourscore and Ten Years of Age, (to  
 which length of Days not more than one of Ten Thous-  
 and do arrive) if he hath lived Threescore Years  
 already, the Thirty Years which are yet to come  
 will pass and at length be quite expired out and finished,  
 as the Threescore Years already have been. An End  
 will come ; as it is Emphatically noted and doubled  
 for our the more taking notice thereof by the Prophet,  
*An End is come, the End is come, it watcheth for thee ;*  
*Behold it is come, The Morning is come upon thee, O thou that*  
*dwest in the Land. The time is come, the day of trouble*  
*is near, and not the sounding again of the Mountains. Ezek.*  
 7, 6, 7. The Time of last Sicknels or Death hath alrea-  
 dy come upon many Millions of past Generations, and  
 upon a very great many of the present : The same also  
 watcheth for thee, who art as yet Breathing on this  
 Earth, and it will very quickly be returned and said as  
 to thy case and feeling, Behold it is come. The Morn-  
 ing of Futurity and Immortality is come upon thee, O  
 thou that dwellest in the Earth ; the Time is come ; and  
 if thou hast sinned and done Evil, the day of Trouble is  
 near, even that Indignation and wrath, Tribulation and  
 Anguish, which shall be upon every Soul that doth Evil ;  
 for the day of Death unto such is not the End, but the  
 beginning of Sorrows. *And not the sounding again of the*  
*Mountains.* There is no more Resorting to the Pleasures  
 and comforts of Life, or to those Methods and arts of  
 hardening and Insensibility, as have been heretofore used.  
 This End of Life hath long since come upon *Hezekiah*, al-  
 though he had Fifteen Years more added unto his days.  
 Why, they are over and gone and near upon three times  
 Fifteen Hundred more since the Lord by *Isaiah* spake thus  
 unto him. Now as in truth, nothing is long that hath an  
 End, and as it is written, *It is a light thing that thou shouldst*  
*be my Servant to raise up the Tribes of Jacob, and to Restore*

the preserved of Israel, I will also give thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my Salvation unto the End of the Earth. So in like manner it may be truly Reasoned, it is a Light thing that God should give unto us the Reasonable Inhabitants of this his Earth Threescore Years and Ten or Fourscore Years, nay if it were to every one of us also the days of *Methusaleh*, nine hundred sixty and nine years; for it is immediately afterwards recorded; *And he died. Gen. 5. 27.* For we can conceive and apprehend somewhat more, Namely, what is like unto what is expressed here, to Restore the preserved of *Israel*. That is, in the sense which we would allude and apply unto, for to this agree the other Scriptures of Truth, As God in the first and continued forming of Man of the dust of the Ground Breathed into his Nostrils the Breath of Life and *Man became a Living Soul*. And as he doth preserve this Breath of Life in, and holds our Souls in Life all the days we Breathe live and move on this Earth: So it is an easy thing for this same God to preserve this Breath of Life again after it is gone forth and the Man returns to his Earth, and also to preserve the dust of the Ground (which he doth accordingly) into which his Body turns and Moulders. So as in the Resurrection (for God will do so) to Restore the preserved of *Israel*, to restore the preserved of *Adam*, even of all his Children and Posterity: So that he will restore the preserved whole Body and Soul of each and every one of them. Why, the Soul was preserved all the while in the Cabinet, Archives and keeping of God (according as the Scripture Phraseth it, *Commit the keeping of their Souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.*) And he will restore and raise up the Body also, which all the while was preserved in his dust and ashes according as it was either buried in the Ground or burnt with Fire, according to the two ancient ways of Interment and disposal thereof after it was dead and the Soul gone out of it. Yea, and it would be a light thing if God should not do thus, as to raise up all the descendants of *Adam*, the Tribes of *Jacob*, and in this sense also, To Restore the Preserved of *Israel*, that his own great work of Creation might be Perfect and Compleat unto the End of the Earth, unto the End of time, yea unto the end of his whole work of Creation, for that would not be Perfect and Compleat, unless he should

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annex salvation unto it. That is, save and bring it up again from that Perishing and Corruption, that Death and Dissolution which hath already come in part, and is yet further to come upon the whole Creation of God, Because the Creature it self also shall be delivered from the Bondage of Corruption, into the Glorious liberty of the Children of God. For we know that the whole Creation groaneth (the reason whereof is that Perishing and Corruption, the Death and Dissolution which as yet it is subject unto) and *Travaileth in Pain together until now*, Rom. 8. 21, 22. But when God shall extend his salvation so far as to save and preserve the whole from the same Perishing and Corruption, Death and Dissolution which it hath underwent, when the *New Heavens and the New Earth* (under which are comprised all things contained in them) which *He will make, shall remain*, Isa. 66. 22. By which word, *remain*, is denoted an Eternal, Immutable and Irreversible State of things. For if it was to be for never so many Millions of Years, it would not be properly remaining but transitory, because that the several Parts and Portions of time do pass and succeed one another. Then the whole Creation instead of the former *Groaning and Travailing in Pain*, will *rejoyce with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory*, Because that thus it will be delivered from the former Bondage of Corruption, into the Glorious Liberty of the Sons of God, and then shall be brought to pass that saying, *I know that whatsoever God doth, it shall be for ever*, Eccles. 3. 14. And the Works of God will be found worthy of himself, that is, Eternal. It stands on this wise in the order and decree of things, to do them at first in a lesser degree in order to a greater: To carry and advance them from Imperfection to Perfection. *It is sown in Corruption, It is raised in Incorruption*: To first make them with a Perishing Nature, and afterwards Graft on and add an Eternal Nature, that they are never more to be done away, nor yet to cease to be. *All this cometh from the Lord of Hosts, which is wonderful in Counsel and Excellent in working*. And all this is as certainly true and will be found so in the appointed time, as God is God; which again, is as certain as that there is a world and any thing in it; for he is the Maker of all things and by whom they subsist.

Then Philip opened his Mouth, and began at the same Scripture and Preached unto him Jesus. So if one was to



begin at this same Scripture, Behold, I will add unto thy Days Fifteen Years, and from thence Preach unto you Eternal Life, (which God that cannot lye promised before the World began (for discovery was made thereof by little and little unto the Fathers.) *But hath in due times manifested his word through Preaching,* Titus 1. 2, 3.) It might at first seem hard and perplex unto ye, how the Preacher would draw forth and infer Eternal Life from these Words; which at first sight and appearance rather shews the contrary, that the Life of Man will come to an utter end. And yet it hath been made out in some Measure. But the Reasoning and Inference of Eternal Life doth yet further arise from that word, *add.* For as the Apostle Paul argues somewhat, yea, very much in reference to the case in hand, *If there be no Resurrection of the Dead, then is Christ not risen; for if the Dead rise not, then is Christ not raised,* 1 Cor. 15. 13, 16. So in like manner it may be here reasoned, if God did add Fifteen Years unto *Hezekiah's* Life, because he had heard his Prayer and seen his Tears, so he will add unto him and to all others (who pray and cry for, and shall be Judged worthy) that *Blessing which the Lord hath commanded, even Life for evermore,* Psal. 133. 3. The words foregoing are to be taken notice of, *As the Dew of Hermon, and as the Dew that descended upon the Mountains of Zion:* Even so this *Life for evermore, is to descend upon the Reasonable Inhabitants of this Earth, after they are descended into the Bars of the Pit.* Which it is as easy for God to give unto those his Creatures, as to command his Dew to descend down from above. It is as easy a matter with Almighty God to Link and Annex on *Life for evermore,* as soon as this *Life,* which is as a Vapour, and continueth not, is ended, as to add Fifteen Years, or any Days, Weeks, Months, or Years, to this Temporal Life, or as it was to hold our Souls in Life those Days which are past already, or as it is to give any Life at first. All things are equally possible to an Almighty Power, and what he hath said, shall be fulfilled. And therefore it fitly and properly comes in the middle of that aforequoted Place out of *Titus, In hope of Eternal Life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the World began,* Titus 1. 2. For indeed it is promised throughout all the Old Testament, tho' it be most commonly shaded there in Dark Speeches and General Expressions, as *I am*

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the God of Abraham, &c. *I am thy God.* I commanded them Statutes, which if a Man do, He shall even live in them. This of necessity must be understood of future and Eternal Life; for Transgressors also did live this Present and Temporal Life. *The Lord, the hope of thy Fathers.* And therefore they must remain and be raised up again in being tho' dead and gone, or otherwise God could not be properly and truly stiled their Hope. And so this adding of Fifteen Years unto the Days of *Hezekiah*, was an earnest and pledge before-hand and also a making known and shewing unto him in a mystery, that God would add and annex unto him Life for evermore, when those Fifteen Years of Reprieve should be gone out. In a Word, the difference between the Preaching, manifestation and making known of Eternal Life under the Old Testament; And that to us now made under the Gospel, was as the first breaking of the Day or Twilight, is now as to the Shining more and more unto perfect Day, or as an Hour and an half before Sun rising, is to its shining in its fullest and clearest Brightness. For those of old time, had but just a Guess and Glimmering thereof; *Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have Eternal Life*, John 5. 39. But we know and are assured that in them we have Eternal Life; Now Jesus Christ hath Abolished Death and brought Life and Immortality to Light (which before was in the Twilight only) through the Gospel. *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even Eternal Life*, 1 John 2. 25.

O Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! How dost thou fill and swallow up our Thoughts with Terrour and Amazement! To Launch forth into thee (which we unavoidably must) seems at first sight as dreadful, as for us little Creatures to throw our selves into the great and wide Sea, where we are as it were lost and are as nothing in Comparison of it. Or, as it seems dreadful to stand alone upon an exceeding high Pinacle, having no more room than only just to set our foot upon with nothing to hold by, but encompassed about only with the thin, Vast and Spacious Air. Unless we have hope, the Anchor of the Soul, which must have some Ground or Object to fix on. Now the Object of Hope is the Promises; and Particularly and in a most eminent manner, that great Promise which he hath Promised, even Eternal Life; Otherwise we shall be of all  
Men,

Men, yea, of all Creatures, most miserable. *For as the Tree Falls, so it lies.* As Death leaves us, so Judgment finds us. As the Soul goes out of the Body, whether sanctified and renewed, or unsanctified and unrenewed, so it remains and so it must appear in Gods sight when she shall come before him, and is to receive accordingly, There is no Redressing or Altering her Condition in Eternity. Fifteen Years, yea, Fifteen Thousand Years, yea, Fifteen Millions of Years, yea, Fifteen Millions of Millions of Years, (for so many will God add unto the Life of every one of us, as soon as ever this fluid Breath is gone forth out of our Nostrils) And so to go on in Numbers after that manner in as long a scrowl of Figures, as long as the Earth is in Circumference, which is about 21000 Miles, or as would Reach up from hence to the highest Heavens which is a thousand times longer, which would amount to such a Number as no Man can Number. And yet all this would be no more in Comparison to Eternity, than the twinkling of an Eye is to our whole Life here. Conceive in your Thoughts all the Sand that is on the Seashore, or on the Earth, all the Piles of Grass that did ever Grow or are now Growing, all the Grains of Corn, all the leaves of Trees, all the drops of Rain that ever fell, or the drops of water that are in the Sea and Rivers, all the Stars that are in the Firmament. In a Word, all the Creatures, Men, Beasts, Birds, Fishes, Flies, and Insects, which were ever, or now are : Take and reckon all this together which will amount to a Prodigious, I had almost said, Infinite Number ; but that would be improper speaking, for the greatest Number is not so. And all this again, is no more to the Years of Eternity, or Proportionable to the duration thereof, than a Minute, or second now is unto a Year.

I cannot go further in the description of Eternity, which is like the High and Lofty one, the Inhabiter thereof, hath no Bounds nor measure.

Two Practical uses and inferences from what hath been now said, I would recommend and leave for the Readers own Private, particular and several Meditations.

1. Think always, I mean before ye are entred into it, think much upon Eternity.

2. Pray without ceasing, and be ye always in a Praying Posture of mind. Having your heart continually lifted up

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towards the Invisible God, and Requesting those Mean and Preparatory things of him. For himself having spoken to us his Creatures, *Do this and live*, there the heart is always to be Answering and Saying, Lord, evermore give us this Bread, even that Bread which cometh down from Heaven and giveth Life unto the World. Lord, Give us Grace, Strength and Power, to do all those several things, which thou requirest of us, that we may also do these things and live. *After two Days will He revive us, in the third Day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight*, Hof. 6. 2. That he would hear our Prayer and see our Tears, even that he may add to our Days Fifteen Years, or how few soever the remaining Evil Days of our Pilgrimage are, or shall be according as it is in the appointment and foreknowledge of our God, yet that we may in these Days of our flesh offer up continually unto him strong Crying and Tears, that we may be heard in that we fear before him; That when these Days of our Flesh, the time of our Ministration and Warfare here on Earth are Ended, the Lord would add unto each of us a Blessed Eternity; which He will to such and only to such, as he shall find and judge worthy to obtain that Resurrection. For we must of necessity be raised up and restored to Life and Being again, so to remain throughout the Vast and Infinite Duration thereof.

As to the first, Think always and very much upon Eternity. As often as you think upon time, which is every Day, and as often as you hear the Clock strike, Do you also think upon Eternity; and let that enter into your thoughts. And compare the vast odds and difference between them both, the Natural result and consequent whereof is, That ought to be most minded, which is of most concern. As the Days are now passing on, so the duration of Eternity will quickly begin but never End. And we are continually breathing and moving towards it, till at length the body like the shell, doth actually break and fall from it, and the Soul is as it were hatched and brought forth into Eternity. I my self, and so ye who now dwell in time, must be Launched forth into that State and that Infinite duration, where time shall be no longer. And as this is certainly true, in the order and decree of God concerning us Mortal Creatures, so we should always think much



much of it, and have it continually in our Minds. But this is the unhappiness and fault, that People are so usually cumbered with the little things of time, that they forget and do not heed the great things of Eternity. And the things Temporal do Choak and stifle the sense of things Eternal : But here we should all along use the Godly Discretion and Soul saving wisdom, as to renounce the abstract and separate from them, in order to think more and have yet greater searching of heart, how to secure ourselves a blessed Portion in the good things of Eternity.

Secondly, *Pray without ceasing*, Or, Be ye always in Praying Posture of Mind, having your heart lifted up unto God. Which use doth hence arise, that if God hear *Hezekiah's* Prayer, so as to add to his Days Fifteen Years more ; This is Encouragement and Invitation to us all for us to offer up continually Prayers unto God, that we would add unto these few and evil Days remaining of our Life, Fifteen Millions of Millions of Years ; yea, that we exceeding infinite duration, which no Man could Number of a Blessed Eternity. It is very well worth while Praying throughout our Life, that we may gain Heaven. The *Duty of Praying without ceasing*, may be performed by having the heart always fixed on, or lifted up unto God. To have it always Bent towards, and intent on him that is invisible. And continually breathing forth Desires, Supplications, Intreaties and Intercessions unto him. That as the Pulse continually Beats, the Mouth continually Breathes to the Heart and Soul may continually Pray unto God Even for Grace and Glory. That is, not so much to Pray for Heaven immediately, or *per saltum*, to leap into it at once. For there is no such doing, but for all the mean things which are Necessary and Preparatory towards it. Even to wrestle with God in Prayer, until the breaking of the Day of Immortality ; and not to let him go, *Except thou bless me with the blessing which the Lord hath Commanded, even Life for Evermore*. As soon as, and against the time, that our life which is as a Vapour and continueth not is Ended. That the same Lord, the God of David our Father, as he did add Fifteen Years to the Days of *Hezekiah*, so that he would be pleased to add unto thee or me, or such of us as are of his Elect, when this Temporal life of ours is Ended, Life Eternal. Amen.

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## S E R M O N I.

O N

Phil. IV. 11.

*For I have Learned in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be Content.*

**T**H E Drift and Design of all Preaching the Word is, that People may *cease to do Evil* and *Learn to do well*, as much as ever they can. And inasmuch as a great deal of sin is occasioned through distrust, murmuring, concerning the exceeding Sinfulness and Provocation whereof ye may read in several places in the Book of *Numbers*, our Hearts fretting against the Lord: (*The Foolishness of Man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord* Covetousness and such like. And on the other hand, that we may *finish our Course with joy, even when Bonds and Afflictions abide us in every place.* And the several severe and harsh dispensations of Providence which befall us (they being so many Exercises and Tryals whereby God holds his Servants in warfare here on Earth) do not move us, nor yet hinder us, but that we may Nevertheless finish the Ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God; And that no outward thing whatever which shall happen unto Men, may hinder them in the discharge of, and finishing that work which God hath appointed them severally on this Earth for to do; *That ye may trust in the Lord and do Good, so shalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily thou shalt be fed.* And perform every

title of your respective Duties in whatever Vocation or Calling, Trade or Employment, State or Condition of Life God hath placed ye in, Come Prosperity or Adversity, whether ye receive Good, or Evil things from the Hands of God, That ye may still in all the several Periods and Stages of your ensuing life, whether it be up Hill or on smooth Ground, in dirty or clean way drive at these two ends, eschew Evil and do Good, bearing the same still in Mind and Practising the same, These and such like are the reasons of my choice to Discourse on this Subject, *For I have Learned in whatsoever State I am in, therewith to be Content.*

They are the Words of *St. Paul*, which he brings in up on the occasion of an Act of *Liberality* which the *Philippians* shewed towards him ; which they would have done before, but they lacked opportunity, and at last they did it. Thus much is signified from those words immediately foregoing our Text. *But I rejoiced in the Lord Greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again, wherein ye also were careful but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want.* Which words do carry an Innuendo, Intimation or Meaning, tho he doth not affirm it plainly through modesty and shame by Nature, which doth usually accompany that condition of his want. Or rather, he doth afterwards so express himself, that what would be want to others was none to him ; Because by this excellent Grace of Contentation he had so made it that want was as it were no want unto him. *Not that I speak in respect of want,* ( Why should he use this Phrase and Manner of Speech unless there was something in it. In verse 16. He speaks out plainly, *Ye sent once and again unto my necessity* ) For I have Learned in whatsoever State I am in therewith to be Content:

Brethren, It is no new or strange thing for the Saints and Servants of God to be in Want, Need, or Poverty for this is what happened to others of former Generations and in other Countreys. A remarkable Instance and Example whereof was the Apostle *Paul* as he giveth us here to understand, as also in other places of his Epistles. *Now there cried a certain Woman of the Wives of the Sons of the Prophets unto Elisha, saying, thy Servant, my Husband is Dead, and thou knowest that thy Servant did fear the Lord*



and the Creditor is come to take unto him my two Sons to be Bondmen, whereupon Elisha did work a Miracle to pay that debt, 2 Kings 4. 1. Here was one that did fear the Lord and yet was in debt. The time would fail me to tell of all those his Servants and Prophets that were under the Old Testament Dispensation, of Christ and the Apostles, and the Poor Saints ( to whom it is said in an eminent manner, *the Gospel is Preached* ) who have been since that time in the World, who were but Poor and Low in Estate as to this Worlds Goods. The Patriarke Jacob was hardly put to his shifts, and yet he found sustenance by the Providence or providing of Almighty God ; which he doth intimate and most thankfully acknowledge upon his Death Bed, *God before whom my Fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all along unto this Day.* Gen. 48. 15. This answered unto that Vow, which he Vowed in the times of his Travels and Pilgrimage, we read in Gen. 28. 20. *If God will be with me in the way that I go, and will give me Bread to Eat and Raiment to put on, so that I come again to my Fathers House in Peace, then shall the Lord be my God.* Which kind of Expression then uttered, did carry with it some kind of fear and distrust, as also therein was contained Prayer, Trust and Confidence. The Patriarke Goes on to add, *The Angel which redeemed me from all Evil,* Gen. 48. 16. Notwithstanding his saying of this, Nevertheless, he did meet with Afflictions and Weariness ; But the Angel of the Lord, even at the very same time did preserve him from the Evil of those Afflictions ; and afterwards redeemed him utterly from the afflictions and troubles themselves. Here it may be asked, What is the Evil of Afflictions ? It is either sin, or to be made miserable by them ; which the true Saint or Servant of God is not, nor yet doth he give way unto the other, in whatever affliction doth befall or happen unto him. It is an excellent Character that is left recorded of Job, that amidst all his Griefs and Calamities : *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly,* Job 1. 22. And so it is with every one of us, that do serve and fear him. God doth not so much preserve us from Afflictions and Troubles ; for he doth suffer, yea, and order them to fall upon us : But then it is, that he doth redeem us from all Evil, when amidst and under the Pain, Smart and Vexation of them, In all this we

fin not, nor yet leave Duty undone, nor yet charge God foolishly. So that no hard thoughts do arise in our minds, nor yet do our hearts fret against the Lord.

*But even unto this day when Moses is Read (and so it is at this Day, when the Gospel of Christ is Read) the Veil is upon their Heart, 2 Cor. 3. 15. Seeing many things, but thou observest not, Isa. 42, 20. And so People read many things in the Scriptures, the Book of the Lord, but they Observe them not. They do not confer experiences in their own Souls, and commune and search with their own Spirit how it is there. The Lord hath given me that knowledge, even from the times of my Youth, and the days of my former Years, that what I did Read in that Book, I should apply unto my self. And I remember particularly, that above ten Years since, when I was in my Chamber and still, as it is written, Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think that ye have Eternal Life, John 5. 39. Of which Salvation the Prophets have enquired and searched diligently, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ did signify. 1 Pet. 1. 10. 11. So it was, That not upon the outward customary or cursory reading, but upon the searching (Marke that) yea upon the searching Diligently of the Scriptures I found, how that the whole Current and Stream of the Promises and good things of God were therein declared, and made unto the Poor and Needy.*

*For the Needy shall not alway be forgotten, the expectation of the Poor shall not perish for ever, Psal. 9. 18. For the Oppression of the Poor, for the Sighing of the Needy, now will I arise saith the Lord, I will set him in Safety from him that puffeth at him Psal. 12. 5. I know that the Lord will maintain the Cause of the Afflicted, and the Right of the Poor, Psal. 140. 12. When the Poor and Needy seek Water and there is none, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Jacob will not forsake them, Isa. 41. 17. Saith Jesus Christ, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel unto the Poor, Luke. 4. 18. Blessed be ye Poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God, Luke. 6. 20. Hath not God chosen the Poor of this World, Rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom which he hath Promised to them that Love him, James. 2, 5. There are Innumerable other places of Scripture to the same purpose. But Observe here the Limitation and Restriction; for the divinely Inspired Apostle doth not here say, the Lord hath chosen all the Poor*

of this World, but only those, who (as the Words immediately following add) are *Rich in Faith and Heirs of the Kingdom which he hath Promised to them that Love him.* So that none of the good things afore or hereafter mentioned, do belong to such Poor as are Ungodly, Ignorant or Sinners.

Again, in the same Scriptures of Truth, there are many Evil things spoken against the Rich of the People. *But ye have despised the Poor. Do not Rich Men oppress you, and draw you before the Judgment Seat? Doe they not Blaspheme that Worthy Name by the which ye are called?* James. 2, 6, 7. Go to now ye Rich Men, Weep and Howl for your Miseries that shall come upon you. Your Riches are corrupted and your Garments are moth eaten. Your Gold and Silver is Cankered, and the Rust of them shall be a witness against you and shall eat your Flesh as it were Fire. Ye have heaped Treasure together for the last Dayes: ye have lived in pleasure on the Earth, ye have Nourished your Hearts as in a Day of Slaughter, James, 5, 1, 2, 5. Wo unto you that are Rich, for you have received your Consolation, Luke. 6. 24. Wo unto them that joyn House to House that lay, Field to Field.—Therefore Hell hath enlarged her self and opened her Mouth without measure: And their Glory, and their Multitude, and their Pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it, Isa. 5. 8, 14. Now the Scripture saith nothing in vain; for all of it, even to every tittle must be fulfilled; and that Wo which is therein Pronounced against them, and hangs over their Head, will at length fall down upon them in Punishment and Misery. They are inclosed in their own fat, with their Mouth they speak proudly. — Deliver my Soul (saith David by the Spirit) from the Wicked, which is thy Sword, from Men which are thy Hand, O Lord, from Men of the World, which have their Portion in this Life, and whose Belly thou fillest with thy hid Treasure. They are full of Children, and leave the rest of their Substance to their Babes, Psal. 17. 10, 14. Then said Jesus unto his Disciples, Verily, I say unto you, that a Rich Man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a Camel to go through the eye of a Needle, then for a Rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God, Mat. 19, 23, 24. Therefore shall the Lord of Hosts, send among his fat ones leanness — Behold the Lord of Hosts, shall lop the Bough with Terror, and the High ones of Stature shall be hewn down, and the Haughty shall be Humbled, Isa. 10.

16, 33. *The Lord of Hosts hath Purposed it, to Stain the Pride of all Glory, and to bring into contempt all the Honourable of the Earth, Isa. 23. 9. How much she hath Glorified her self, and lived deliciously, so much Torment and Sorrow give her, Rev. 18, 7. The Lord God hath Sworn by himself, saith the Lord God of Hosts, I abhor the Excellency of Jacob, and hate his Palaces, Amos. 6, 1.* Here God (whose thoughts are not your thoughts *Isa. 55, 8.* declares his abhorrence and hatred against them, whom the World Loves and Respects, Flatters and endeavours to please. *Surely Men of Low degree are Vanity, and Men of High degree are a lie, Psal. 62, 9.* Observe here that Blunt expression, and plain English (if we may so say) of the Holy Ghost, *Men of High degree are a lie.* Which seems to intimate forth, that that opinion or Estimation, which other People have of them, or they of themselves, as if there were some what in them, which were more, above, or better then other Men, is a meer *lie* and Falshood. *Yet now our Flesh* (speaking of those in Debt and Poverty) *is as the Flesh of our Brethren, (who were more Rich and Wealthy) our Children as their Children Neh. 5, 5. God hath made of one Blood all Nations of Men, Acts. 17, 26.* Which includes High and Low, Rich and Poor alike. So it is in God's account now, and as to the future Judgment he will make concerning them. *Will he esteem thy Riches, nor thy Gold, nor all the forces of Strength, Job. 36, 19. That accepteth not the Persons of Princes, nor regardeth the Rich more then the Poor, for they are all the Work of his Hands, Job, 34, 19.* O that there were the same God-like mind in my kindred according to the Flesh; for as to them and some others, this following Scripture is Literally fulfilled in me, *Our Soul exceedingly filled with the Scorning of those that are at Ease, and with the contempt of the Proud, Psal. 123, 4.* Indeed it is fit and Requisite, that there should be some order and Distinction amongst Men and Women in the World; but then on the other hand, for any one whatever, to have his Heart lifted up above his Brethren, *Deut. 17, 20. Or to despise the Poor, James, 2, 6.* is a Sinful and Wrong extremity.

*The Lord seeth not as Man seeth, For Man looketh on the outward Appearance, but the Lord looketh on the Heart, 1 Sam. 16, 7.* If there be Beauty or Gayety without, Man hath a Wonderful conceit of him, as of some goodly one; but the Heart (which is as manifest in God's Sight, as the outward Face is in ours) be evil, notwithstanding the fine outside

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such an one is as much *hated* and *abhorred* (It is his own Phrase in *Amos* 6, 8.) in God's Sight, as the most abject and contemptible Fellow is in ours. *For thou wilt save the afflicted People, but wilt bring down High looks,* *Psalm* 18, 27. In the former Part of this Verse is Favour and Mercy to the Poor and *Afflicted*, but in the latter part thereof, is Terrour and Evil to the Rich and High minded. God's thoughts are contrary to Mans thoughts; for he speaks in favour and comfort of the Poor, whom the World abhorreth and despiseth. On the other hand, he speaks Terrour, and to *Humble* those (as may be seen in *Isa.* 10. 33. afore-quoted) who are so much flattered and whole *Persons* are had in *Admiration* because of advantage, *Jude* 16. The significancy of all which they shall feel, who do not mind these things, nor take due warning. The Scripture runs thus all a long, when it mentions that difference of outward State and Condition, of Poor and Rich, promising good things to the former sort, and denouncing evil things to the latter sort. *And Abraham said to the Rich Man, Son, Remember that thou in thy Life Time Receivedst thy Good things, and likewise Lazarus Evil Things, but now he is Comforted, and thou art Tormented,* *Luke* 16, 25.

Now to make known how I did apply all this to my self, which the Reader may apply to himself also; for in the application and bringing it home to our selves, there is the Use and Godly Edification. I say, that Considering all these things together, and weighing them in my mind; For I do believe, and am perswaded, that it is as certainly true, and will be so in the *times of the Restitution of all things*, as, now I am sure that I write these lines; hereupon God knows that I Lie not, I did wish and desire, that I my self might be brought into the condition of the Poor and Needy, to the intent that I might come in for a share, and to be a partaker of those Precious Promises, which throughout the Scripture God hath made unto them.

As God commanded *Hosea* to take a *Wife of Whoredoms*, so I was directed, and for which same Reason also I did afterwards, *viz.* On the seventh Day of the seventh Month, 1694. Marry a Maiden, *Ezek.* 44. 22. as Poor in outward State and Condition, as Poor well could be; for she and her Parents were in the very next degree, to open and downright Beggary. But I made choice of such an one the rather, Thinking that hereby I might make more sure of

‘ Partaking of those Precious Promises afore-mentioned  
 ‘ and that hereby I should obtain a better Resurrection in  
 ‘ the future State of things.

Marvel not at this; for it is somewhat like that *Mind*  
*which was also in Christ Jesus*, Phil. 3. 5. *Who though he*  
*was Rich, yet for our sakes he became Poor, that we through his*  
*Poverty might be Rich*, And so though I was in a Moderate  
 Condition, yet I Voluntarily (of mine own free choice, and  
 not out of any Imprudent Management) *became Poor* for  
 the Gospel’s sake, and for the better making known the  
 Truth as it is in *Jesus*. The like may any one else do, Pro-  
 vided it be in good Works, 1 Tim. 6. 18, 19. and in Acts of  
 Alms giving to their Power, yea and beyond their Power,  
 2 Cor. 8. 3. but not in Pride or Pleasure, Prodigality or  
 Vain Things, or in what is Sin, Foolish or Unlawful; for  
 such who *become Poor* any of these ways will not receive  
 any thing from the Lord, but Wrath and Punishment,

But my first Wish and Desire of this Nature, was some  
 Considerable time before I had ever known. what Want or  
 Need was in all my foregoing Life, which I have Experienc-  
 ed since, and may yet again. I did not then know nor in  
 the least apprehend, how or after what manner  
 or by what I should be involved, into Poverty,  
 which God hath Since shewed to me, That is to say *By Pub-  
 lishing of, and Suffering for God’s Eternal Truth* (which is the  
*best of Works*) and by the oppression of Man, Psa. 119, 134  
 which hath arose upon that occasion. Although this same  
 Truth hath occasioned to me Poverty, Imprisonments  
 2 Cor. 11. 23. Trouble and Sorrow, *But I will Hope conti-  
 nually and Praise thee yet more and more*. For I believe still that  
 at Length it will have the Contrary Good Effects, and  
 shall yet *Praise thee upon the Psaltery, even thy Truth, O my*  
*God*. Psa. 71. 14, 21. Which will be, if either I should  
 live on this Earth to see it Obeyed. For there is an Obedience  
 Nevertheless due to the Truth, as may be gathered from  
 Rom. 2, 8. Gal. 3, 1. although in both those places People  
 obey it not. Or rather it will be when my Work shall be  
 Rewarded, in the time of the Restitution of all Things  
 for my bringing it forth, and for my Suffering for it.

I Do hereby take this occasion and opportunity, to Praise  
 the Lord for his Goodness, and to declare his Wonders (for  
*am as a Wonder unto many*, Psa. 71, 7.) Even to thank and  
 Exalt his Holy Name for Granting my desire in this thing

for it Springs into my Soul, as some Comfortable Evidence (though Strangers, and Natural People cannot preceive and discern it) that I am indeed an Heir of Salvation, in that I have lived by his Grace and good Providence here on Earth, and was in the same *Low Estate*, Psa. 136, 23. For the same and like Reasons, as his Elect, and Servants of former Generations. Whose are the Promises of better things, then those which pertain to the Life that now is, even to that which is to come. *According as his Divine Power hath given unto us, all Things that pertain to Life and Godliness*, 2 Pet. 1. 3. Although the former Sort were Poor, Low and Mean, yet they were Sufficient to that End: According as his Divine Wisdom and Goodness thought expedient. *Bless the Lord O my Soul, and all that is within me Bless his Holy Name. Bless the Lord O my Soul, and forget not all his benefits; which aforementioned I esteem and receive as such: Although the Natural Man discerns it not*, 1 Cor. 2. 14. The Ignorant Person and Unbeliever do not apprehend any in it, but they call it my Misfortune Ruine and Misery. *But I know whom I have believed, and I lay hold on that Promise, They shall not be Ashamed that wait for me*, Isa. 49. 23. And although in this present life, where neither the Judgment written, Ps. 149. 9. is Executed, nor yet the Reward promised is Actually given, many of the Servants of God, have been Liable to shame and disappointment from the World; Yet the answer of God, saith unto them on this Wise, for further Hope and Encouragement, *But Israel shall be Saved in the Lord, with an Everlasting Salvation. Ye shall not be ashamed, nor Confounded World without End*, Isa. 45, 17. At long Run, it shall not be thus; but in the End of Time, all things that are written in the Scriptures, shall be fulfilled and found True.

As also hereby I have been taught and experienced with the Apostle *Paul* in the Text: (One calls the School of Afflictions the best School; and the wisdom of God saith as to this, *It is good for a Man that he bear his Yoke in his Youth*, Lam. 3. 27.) *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound every where and in all things, I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

And

And because of what Christ saith, *For there is nothing hid which shall not be manifested, neither was any thing kept secret but that it should come abroad*, Mark 4. 32. Therefore from this being the mind of Christ, I think it both proper and convenient to declare and make known, what condition, I one of his Ministers and Members have been brought into, as I was in the Ministration of his word and suffering for the same. I being once in great Anguish of Spirit with Tears in mine Eyes, like Hagar in the Wilderness, *When the Water was spent in the Bottle*, Gen. 21. 15. Being at a considerable distance from my Native Country, when almost all my Money was gone, and I did not know where to have more, and then I had most need of it; I thereupon fell down upon my knees to God. And there I *Poured out my complaint before him and shewed him my trouble*. And as it is commanded and directed in the Gospel, *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing with Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God*, Phil. 46. Accordingly I did then make known my Requests unto him, and then within less than a quarter of an hour, I perceived a still Voice speaking to my Soul on this wise, *Thou hast made known thy Requests unto God, go forth and do the same unto his Servants*. This was one of the most sensible Answers, and Return to Prayer that ever I perceived and observed in all my Life-time, and was somewhat like that which we read in *Dan. 9. 21, 22, 23*. And thereupon I went forth the day following, and made known my Requests unto them, and asked for the Alms and willing Contribution of Christian People; and of the two first which I ever made application unto, I had rather a matter of Bounty and Liberality, than a common Alms-giving, being received by them with a great deal of courtesouness and civility. And from thenceforth for well nigh two years and an half (*Blessed be the Lord, for he hath shewed me his kindness in a strong and populous City*) I subsisted, and was fed by a wonderful and continued train and course of Providence, according to that usual method thereof *He that had gathered much, had nothing over; and he that had gathered little, had no lack*, 2 Cor. 8. 15. It being agreeable with the wisdom and ways of God, to do nothing which is superfluous, or more than needs



needs must; nor yet is he wanting in what means are absolutely necessary : And so I had just sufficient for my several needs, and not much more nor yet less ; and it was reached forth unto me by the visible hand of Invisible Providence just at the time, or a little before as I had occasion. Herein I found that Scripture literally fulfilled in me, *When my Father and my Mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up, Psal. 27. 10.* The Holy Spirit by speaking after that manner, doth presuppose that the Servants of God may be reduced to such kind of straits and exigencies, for the Scripture saith *nothing in vain.* And so when my Father and Mother-in-Law did forsake me and withhold Maintenance, then the Lord did take me up and provide for me by the good will and ministration of his Servants, Blessed be his Name for it. Thus in this Poor, Low, Beggarly (that is, a condition of asking) Estate, I have learned to be content, and in all things I have been instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer want. By the way it is better, and rather to be chosen to be a Beggar, than to be unjust or unrighteous, for we read of one Beggar, namely *Lazarus*, who went to Heaven, but the Scripture saith expressly, *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6. 9.* Yea, of what was extended towards me by way of Alms I had a sweet relish and enjoyment thereof, because I did Eye the goodness of God in and through it : And hereby a proof and trial was had of Peoples subjection and obedience to the commands of the Gospel. Said the Author thereof, Christ Jesus, *The Poor are suffered to be with you always, that whensoever you will, you may do them good.*

As the Apostle *Paul* doth thus write in his own Person unto the *Phillippians*, as in our Text, and so he doth in many other places of his Epistles, so it doth in no wise derogate or vary from the Gravity, Seriousness, or Usefulness of sound Preaching or Writing, for the Minister to declare his own Experiences unto the Hearers; for they, by comparing theirs with the same, may be Profited and Edified hereby. That according to what is written, It may be the same with them also, *Those things which ye have both Learned and Received, and heard and seen in me,* (saith

(saith Paul to the Phillippians) do, and the God of Peace shall be with you, Phil. 4. 9.

It is an easy matter to be content with a Plentiful, Prosperous and Abounding State; but here is the Virtue and the Praise, if People can be and are content with, as that amidst and under these Evil things, they will not charge God foolishly, nor suffer their hearts to fret against him; nor yet will they sin, nor put forth their hands to Iniquity. Altho' thereby they might be delivered and freed from them.

Contentment doth denote an even and smooth temper of mind, a Calmness and Tranquillity of Spirit, in opposition to those liftings up and castings down, or when it is like the *troubled Sea and cannot rest*. Again, It is Peace and not Stupidity or Ignorance. It rubs and goes on through this Earth, and doth not lye still in sloth and deadness. I mean, when a Man knows throughly the Nature of things and therewith is content; but he is somewhat beyond the blockishness and sense of a Beast; which is content with its condition, because it knows nothing better. As also the Soul, tho' it is content with what outward things she hath, is not therefore Idle or Unprofitable, but travels and makes towards the Father of Spirits. A certain Heathen Poet hath described it on this wise, *That she is almost content with the present, but yet doth attempt and try after greater things*. And indeed, if we confine our selves only to such things which are Just, Lawful and Right, then indeed it is both the Duty, and also very consistent with a Servant of the Lord; To be up and be doing, and so far endeavouring after them, as they do not hinder from better and more Precious things. This also comes within that Aphorism, or Rule of the same Apostle, through whom the Spirit of God hath made known the Words of our Text, *Art thou called being a Servant? Care not for it, but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather*, 1 Cor. 7. 21.

Thus having in some measure explained the Nature of Christian Contentment, or at least so far hinted and intimated concerning it; That the Reader may gather and understand the residue thereof, Proceed we now to lay down some Arguments and Reasons to enforce the observance thereof, or to beget the same mind in ye also, as afore is

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said. Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in his Apostle *Paul*, do, and the *God of Peace*, (under which word Contentment is included) *shall be with you.*

The First and greatest Argument for Contentment or Contentation, to me seems to be, in knowing and considering, thoroughly our own Creature state; and that the will of God doth Order and Over-rule all things in this World. This Consideration is two fold. It would be proper therefore to speak somewhat of them severally, and then connect and joyn them together, and then shew what influence and efficacy this double Consideration hath to make us hold our Peace; *Submit our selves to God, James 4. 7.* and to learn in *whatsoever state we are therein to be content.*

In the First place, O Man, know thine own *Creature State*, how thou wert at first made by God, and how that now thou art a Creature in his hands, and purely at his Government, Rule, and Disposal. One would think, this were the easiest thing in the World to be understood, but yet it remains a Mystery, and doth puzzle the apprehensions of People; for even unto this day, *when Moses* or the Prophets, or the Gospel is read, *the veil is upon their hearts*; and an Invisible God is an Unknown God to the multitude and generality of Mankind, in what is called this Christian Nation. For either because they see not God, or rather they do forget him. Thence it is that they do not *look unto the Rock from whence they were hewn nor have Respect unto the hole from whence they were digged*; even so as to eye continually, and have respect, Which signifies looking back *unto their Maker*, and so as to see him that is invisible; *Which holdeth our Soul in Life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved, Psal. 66. 9.* In the Margent there it is putteth, which doth relate to the initial Act of our Creation, as the Word *holdeth* doth denote the continuance thereof all the while we are in Life. Both which are very proper and significative of what our Invisible Maker and Creator doth unto us. For indeed he doth first put our Soul in Life, and then holdeth it therein, all the days which on this Earth it is in the Body. Like as when *Elijah* raised the dead Child,

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he cried unto the Lord, and said, *O Lord, my God, I pray thee, let this Childs Soul come into him again,* 1 Kings 4. 6. By comparing of all which together, we come to know the truth and the manner of our being in this Life, more than ever any Heathen could attain unto by meer reason, by having it thus revealed unto us, how that God at first putteth, and then holdeth, and at length causes the Soul to depart from this Body; and in the Resurrection he will let our Souls come into our Bodies again. In the aforesaid place of *Psal. 66. 9.* it is added, *And suffereth not our feet to be moved.* Now the feet are the Instruments of our moving to and fro; so that we may gather from hence that all our Actions or Motions are ordered by God according to what the Scripture elsewhere saith plainly, in divers places, *Mans goings are of the Lord, How can a man then understand his own way,* Prov. 20. *O Lord, I know that the way of a Man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps,* Jer. 10. 23. *The steps of a good Man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way,* Psal. 37. 23. Here it is expressed by goings and steps, which take in all, and extend even to the very least Motions of his; for so are steps, and so it is as to all of them particularly and severally. But by that Phrase of *Jeremiah, O Lord, I know,* is imported forth that his Saints and Servants do live in a continued sense and knowledge of as much; which brutish Men, and Ignorant Persons, and Unbelievers do not. For the Truth is, *As in him we live, move, and have our Being,* so our several Actions and Doings are ordered of the Lord, though too many do not see and discern it. *Thou broughtest us into the Net, thou laidst Afflictions upon our Loins,* Psal. 66. 11. I have much thought of this Scripture, when I have been for the Word and Truth of God cast into Prison, where was cross-barrs of Iron, and Wood, which did exactly resemble a Net. Here again Carnal and Ignorant Persons, and Unbelievers, will say and reply, That such brought themselves into Trouble and Afflictions, and they think nothing of God herein. But here again, *Let God be true, and themselves Liars; that thou mightest be justified in thy Saying, and overcome* (the Imaginations and Talk of People) *when thou judgest.*



For *David* here saith thus by the Spirit, and ascribes it up immediately to God himself; *Thou broughtest us into the Net, thou laidst Affliction upon our Loins.* For indeed he doth herein speak as one that had a through Knowledge and Understanding of, and insight into this Matter.

And it may be conceived after this manner; the same Lord who sitteth on his Throne, and all the Host of Heaven (who also Order and Dispose of Things here on Earth) stood by him on his Right and on his left. And the Lord said, *Who shall go and persuade Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead?* And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a Spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, *I will persuade him.* And the Lord said unto him, *wherewith?* And he said, *I will go forth, and I will be a Lying Spirit in the mouth of all his Prophets.* And he said, *Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also; go forth, and do so;* 1 Kings 22. 19, 20, 28. Why after the same similitude of things, yea after the very same manner doth the Lord, who looketh from Heaven, he beholdeth all the Sons of Men from the place of his Habitation, He looketh upon all the Inhabitants of the Earth, he fashioneth their hearts alike, he considereth all their Works, Plal. 33. 14, 15. And so he doth Order and Over-rule, and dispose of all their ways and Works. For thus much may be understood; that he our God, or an Evil Spirit from the Lord acts in every Man and Woman by Thoughts or Imaginations. By Thoughts I mean such as are true and good. By Imaginations I intend such as are false or evil. And these Thoughts or Imaginations are the immediate Fore-runners, Principles, or Causes of Action. But here take heed how thou affirmest too far, for let no Man say when he is tempted, *I am tempted of God;* for God cannot be tempted with Evil, neither tempteth he any Man, James, 1. 13. So do not thou say, that God acts in Man or Woman by false or evil Imaginations, for God cannot be the Author of Falshood or Evil; neither doth he tempt or act any Man to it. All this is true, but yet this difficulty may be well understood and reconciled from the aforecited, 1 Kings 22: for there it is said, *All the Host of Heaven stood before him on his right Hand, and on his left.* So that there were good and true Spirits which probably stood on his right

right Hand; and evil and false Spirits which stood on his left Hand. But as an Earthly King doth this or that thing by his Ministers or Officers, so the Everlasting God, the Creator of the Ends of the Earth, whom the Scripture stiles a *great King*, (as so indeed he is) doth act and work through and by his created Beings; that is, by his Angels or Spirits. He sends forth and commands his good Angels or Spirits. He permits or suffers the evil Angels or Spirits. And one of these two sorts doth actuate, or Act in all the Children of Men, according as we read of the *Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Disobedience*. True it is, *Thou art of purer Eyes than to behold Evil, and canst not look on Iniquity*, Hab. 1. 13. Nor yet is he the Efficient Cause or Author of sin or Evil. But yet as *He giveth to all Life and Breath, and all things*, Acts 17. 25. And he hath Created all things, and for thy Pleasure they are and were Created, Rev. 4. 11. And so he doth uphold and govern all things, that they cannot move or act without him; Therefore of necessity he must be so far concerned in sin or evil (for he suffers that, as he did the *manners of the Israelites Forty Tears in the Wilderness*) as is before explained. For though it hath been a puzzling thing unto Divines to assign, how that nothing hath been, nor yet can be done in the World, but what is the Will of God that the same should have been done, for otherwise it was impossible and had never been done, and yet in all this, to keep his Holiness unstained from the Sin or Evil; That he is not in the least a Partaker with and sharer thereof, and that the Will of God is Holy, and Just, and Good; but too many things have been done on this Earth which are Unholy, Unjust and Evil. But yet by *Ascribing Greatness unto our God*, how he at first made and containeth all things, *By lifting up our Eyes on high, and beholding who hath created all these things, that bringeth out their Host by Number, he calleth them all by their Names, by the Greatness of his might, for that he is strong in Power, not one faileth*: By knowing how that he is Sovereign and Infinitely above all other things. By knowing how that the same God, *who made Man at first upright, but he sought out many Inventions*: So in the very beginning he made the Devil and all his Legions of Spirits Good Creatures at first, for that is the re-

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turn made upon the several parts of the Creation. *And God saw that it was Good.* But the Devil and his Angels became Evil of themselves, and *sinned*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 4. and kept not *their first Estate*, Jude 6. And now they are the Black Fountain beneath, from whence do spring up all Sin or Evil. But God (who now suffers it all, and over-rules it for the *Great Ends* of his Glory) is high, and as much exalted above it all, as the Sun in the Firmament shining in its brightness, is above a Quagmire, Dunghill, or dark hole of the Earth. For all the Sin or Evil which hath been, now is, or shall ever be, doth no more Impair, Lessen, or Darken his Holiness, then the other now doth, as to the bright Beams of the Sun. Take and consider all this together into our understandings, with the other Divine Truths which relate to this matter, and they do all most clearly open and unfold this mystery, How God doth suffer sin and yet is not the Author thereof; and how all things both Animate and Inanimate do his will; and yet Nevertheless His Will, like his Commandment, *Is Holy, Just and Good.* So that though the Committing of Sin is not according to the will of God in which he is well pleased; yet it is the will of God barely to suffer, and then afterwards to Punish it. For Notwithstanding all that is here said, still there is a fault, Evil deserving and willfulness in the reasonable Creature, in Committing Sin or Evil, or in speaking Falshood; & upon that fault & evil deserving of theirs, the future Punishment of God is righteously founded.

Here we should remember our Creature State, How that Angels and Devils, Men and Beasts, Birds and Fishes, Things with life or without life, visible or invisible, they are all but Creatures, or Instruments in the Hands of God, for to do whatever his hand or his Counsel hath determined or suffered to be done. *For of a Truth against thy Holy Child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles, and the People of Israel were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy Hand and thy Counsel determined before to be done.* Act. 4. 27 28. In like manner it may be reasoned and applied of the whole Creation of God, *Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapour, stormy Wind fulfilling his Word*, Psal. 148. 8. So all the living Creatures in all their Actings and Movings, do agree and meet herein, for to do *Whatsoever thy Hand and thy Counsel determined before to be done.* So the Devil and his Legions, and all those People in the flesh, our Fellow-creatures, they are all but Instruments in the Hands of God (for the Devil

Acted through *Herod* and *Pontius Pilate*, in putting Christ to Death) for to do *Whatsoever thy Hand and thy Counsel determined before to be done*. And so all those Afflictions, Trials and Temptations, are to be looked upon, which do befall any of the Children of Men. *David* could say concerning *Shimei*, *Let him alone, let him Curse, for the Lord hath bidden him*, 2 Sam. 6. 11. *Abisba* did call him a dead Dog for thus doing. And here we may make use of this Parallel and Similitude, we should not be like unto Ignorant and Angry Dogs to bite the stone, without having respect unto him that flings it. So alas! We are too apt to blame, and to have indignation at that Fellow-creature of ours, or outward Accident, whom, or which we suppose to be the cause of our Affliction, Loss, or Disappointment. But here we should rather be silent and submit, take it with the Spirit of meekness and willing resignation for the *Lord hath bidden him*, or he hath given Commission and Leave to such an Evil or Lying Spirit, to Act through Incarnate or visible Instruments such afflicting things against us. As in good things, It is not such a Man, but *Christ who dwelleth in him*, doth the same, so in evil things the Devil Acts through such who do evil. And over and above all things, we may look up to the Great Invisible God, who Over-rules and Determines all for the Great Ends of his own Glory. *Who will make all things work together for Good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his Purpose*, Rom. 8. 28.

The consideration of all this put together should make us to lay our hand upon our mouth, to have a care least we reply against God. *Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?* Shall the Creature Governed by him and dependant on him, say, Why hast thou suffered or ordered it to be thus or thus with me, which I do not like, or I had rather it was otherwise. *Hath not the Potter Power over the clay of the same lump, to make one Vessel to Honour and another to Dishonour?* Is it not Lawful for the Good Man of the House, for the Lord and Governor of the World, To do what he will with his own? Shall we receive Good at the Hands of God, and shall we not receive Evil? The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; Blessed be the Name of the Lord. For the Lord will not cast off for ever; But though He cause grief, yet will He have Compassion according to the Multitude of his mercies; for He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men.

Lam. 3. 31, 32, 33. These and such like things are written



and scattered up and down here and there in the Book of  
 the Lord for our Comfort and Contentment. *Be still and  
 know that I am God.* That he is our Creator, and we are  
 pure and meer Creatures in his hands. We may perceive a  
 manifest diversity between his own Omnipotency, or Al-  
 mightiness (if I may so express it) and our own impoten-  
 cy, inability and weakness. For it is evident and experi-  
 enced, that there are many things which we would have,  
 and yet we cannot obtain, which we endeavour after, and  
 yet cannot accomplish. As our Bodily motion is confined  
 to such a degree, beyond which we cannot move faster :  
 Our strength is also limited to such a Pitch, that we can  
 lift so much and no more. So we may perceive as to all our  
 other Powers of Action, that they are determined and li-  
 mited on every side. There is none who in this mortal and  
 imperfect state hath all his desires, or every thing accord-  
 ing to his mind, even as he would have. God is to be eyed  
 and observed in this thing also, and it is meet to be said  
 unto him, *It is the Lord, let him do with me what seemeth  
 him Good.* It was a Good Resigned and Contented Tem-  
 per and Disposition of David, when he said, *If I shall find  
 favour in the Eyes of the Lord, He will bring me up again,  
 and shew me both it (the Ark) and his Habitation.* But if  
 He thus say, *I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let  
 him do to me as seemeth Good unto him,* 2 Sam. 15. 25, 26.  
 Even so in all the difficulties and doubts of our Life, amidst  
 all tears and troubles, we should refer them all unto God.  
*Commit thy way unto the Lord,* (the Marginal reading is,  
 Roll thy way upon the Lord) *trust also in him and he shall  
 bring it to pass : Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him,*  
 Psal. 37. 5, 7. And under the Gospel it is commanded,  
*Casting all your care upon him, for He careth for you,* 1 Pet. 5. 7.  
*And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy  
 God led thee in the Wilderness ; where thou hast seen how,  
 that as a Man bareth his Son, so did the Lord bare thee in all  
 the way that thou wentest,* This expression of the Holy Ghost  
 seems to allude unto a Man carrying a Suckling, or Infant in  
 his Arms, which cannot go of it self, but must go whither it  
 is carried, and it knows not. Even so we are as Babes and  
 Sucklings unto God ; And he doth so carry us his Creatures  
 in this Life and through this Wilderness of the Earth, tho'  
 too many do not see, know and discern as much. *For the  
 Lords Portion is his People, Jacob is the Lot of his Inheri-  
 tance. He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as  
 the Apple of his Eye. As an Eagle stirreth up her Nest, flut-*

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tereth over her Young, spreadeth abroad her Wings, taketh  
them and beareth them on her Wings: (Behold, what a fit  
Comparison here is to resemble and set forth, how the In-  
visible Creator doth brood over his visible Creatures and  
take care of them: Like as we read of in the beginning,  
*And the Spirit of God, moved upon the Face of the Waters,*  
Gen. 1. 2. Even so ever since his Spirit, yea, his own Being  
and Himself doth Encompass and contain and over-shadow  
the Face of all his Creation, *He upbalding all things by the  
Word of his Power*) so the Lord alone did lead him, and there  
was no strange God in him. *He made him ride on the High  
Places of the Earth, that he might eat the Increase of the Fields,  
and He made him to suck Honey out of the Rock, and Oyl out of  
the flinty Rock. Butter of Kine, and Milk of Sheep, with fat  
of Lambs, and Rams, of the Breed Bashan; and Goats, with  
the fat of Kidneys, of Wheat, and thou didst drink the Pure  
Blood of the Grape,* Deut. 32. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. From  
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There is no such help in the World towards Contentment, as to have the Knowledge of God; Especially to know and conceive of him as hath been just now explained. The Apostle *Paul* doth intimate that some of the Christians dwelling at *Corinth* to whom he Writes, *Had not the Knowledge of God, I speak this to your shame*, 1 Cor. 15. 34. As truly it is to the shame of all who Name, or profess the Name of Christ to be found without it. But it must be supposed, yea, It is most certain and evident, that *Paul* himself had the Knowledge of God. For otherwise, as he could never have wrote so many true and excellent things concerning God. And it was by this Knowledge of God (even, as he is the Creator, Governour and Disposer of all things) that he had thereby *Learned in whatsoever State he was therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound*, &c.

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There is no need to use many more Words, to shew and inculcate the same. But as it is Written, *And this is Life Eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*: Even so this is the Sweetness and Comfort, the Peace and Satisfaction, the Quiet and Smoothness, the

ness of this present Temporal Life. To know thee, the only true God (as He is Supreme Lord, Governour and Disposer of all things) and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, the Eternal Word, whereby God is more seen and manifest unto our Souls. Alas! when we are amidst trouble, Vexation and Restlessness of Spirit, it is most commonly because we forget God, and behave our selves falsely in his Covenant. But did we know and see him with the Eyes of our Understanding being enlightened? Were our Hearts pure and upright before him? How sweetly and contentedly might we live, under the Apprehension and Care, and Protection of this Good God above; All one, yea, and much more then Subjects under a Lawful and Excellent Prince, Children under a Loving and Good, a Just and Wise Father; and as Servants under the best of Masters. For God doth approve himself more so towards his Creatures, then all those Relations whatever, according to the Flesh.

*At that day shall a Man look unto his Maker, and his Eyes have Respect unto the Holy one of Israel, Isa. 17. 7.* And so when the Inviſible, God is to us All in All; when we see him in all our ways, and in all our goings, in all our Doings and Actions which are ordered by him. As one doth well express it, *When we have wandered all our Ways, Death comes and shuts up the Story of our Days.* Even so all our Ways, Goings, Doings and Actions, that we Creatures are concerned in, it is all, but *Whatever thy hand and thy Counsel determined before to be done;* This lays in the surest base and best Foundation for Patience and Contentment. *I do write the same things over again, which to you it is safe,* That ye may come to the perfect knowledge, and have the continued remembrance of this same Great Truth.

This Duty of Contentment springs up as a Natural Result and Consequence to what we all owe unto him, viz. That we should obey God. It is often inculcated and commanded in Scripture, that we should *obey the Voice of God*, or that man *should obey God*: Yea, it is the drift, design and tendency of the whole Scripture. As also of all our Preaching, that ye may obey God and keep his Commandments in all things. Now that our own will should be brought under and given up to the Will of God, that our Spirit should be subject unto the Father of Spirits, this is an essential part and act of obedience unto God, and herein also Contentment doth consist. *Be silent, O all flesh before the Lord, for he is raised up out of his Holy Habitation, Zech. 2. 13.* And so to be silent and to hold our Peace, and to take it quietly whatever it be, to humble our selves under the mighty hand of God, *Here is the mind that hath wisdom, here is the Faith and Patience of the Saints*; This is the very temper and disposition of the Servants of the Lord God.

Now for the use and application of the foregoing discourse, let him, who shall hear or read these lines see well to it, that the same mind be in him also. Whensoever we hear good and right things spoken of, there let our Hearts and Consciences be upon the work, upon the examination and application of it all to our selves. At the time and place of hearing, How findest thou it, O man or woman to be with

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things belong to thee? Canst thou find an Interest, Propriety and share in them? Is the blessing thine? Why really, here is the Life and Benefit of all Preaching and Hearing, when we can say in truth (and without deceit or a lie) of the good things of God, that they are mine. When our Souls can Eccho back, as we hear him Named, that saying of *Thomas*, one of the twelve Disciples, *My Lord, and my God*. *Thomas* spake thus; after he had reached his hand, and thrust it into the side of *Jesus Christ* who was the *Word*. And so Proportionably, more is the comfort and rejoycing when the words of God reach not our outside only, but our inside also; and then that Inhabitant which is within (the Soul and Conscience) doth answer thereupon, *My Lord, and my God*, here is both Edification and Comfort in this, as also it is a most Quickening and Powerful Exhortation to do all things, whereby we may please and approve our selves unto our beloved. There are more comfortable words to the same purpose in this very same 20th of *John*, *Go to my Brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God*. Hereby in a most eminent manner, he shews himself to be the first born amongst many Brethren, having infinitely greater Priviledge and Prerogative with the Father. For by expressing it on that wise, *My God and your God*, He doth as it were in the first place single out God to himself; and then he communicates him forth unto us. If we may here use such Plainness of Speech, as the Holy Ghost doth elsewhere upon like occasions; It is like carving for ones self in the first place, and then helping others. And I am sure, there is none of his disciples and followers do in the least grudge or think much, that *Jesus* our fore-runner (whom *our Soul loves*) should thus in all things have the Pre-eminence; especially since that he hath *Purchased a Church with his own blood*, he hath the assured promise, that he shall see the *travel of his soul*, he hath obtain'd of God such inexpressible Priviledges for poor mankind, whose Portion before was folly & misery, shame & Death: & thus it is that he doth convey forth thro' his own Life as a Pipe or Conduit, his *Goodness, Friendship & Love to us*, whom he vouchsafes to call *brethren*. Here is the *sufficient rejoycing & satisfaction to the* reasonable creature (who doth know & conceive of these things) & as much as can be expected on this side of heaven. To have the Hope & Assurance, that our *Creator* is our *Father*, and God is our God; when we can say so in the *Congregation and Communion of Saints*; & each of us particularly hath the voice of God witnessing from within our selves, that he is our God. For as he is the God of *Abraham, Isaac & Jacob*, so he is likewise the God of all his Saints & servants by their several respective Names, who do the works of *Abraham*; and then the necessary consequence is, that all things are ours, if he is our God, who is the Creator, Proprietor and Disposer of all things; who hath promised and will perform it; *The Lord will give Grace and Glory; no good thing will be withhold from them that walk uprightly*, Psal. 84. 11.

Here some may be apt to think, all this is very good; But what is it to the Designe of Contentment? It doth pertain and relate thereto, for as there is a certain Band and Connexion, which ties

and knits all the several visible Parts of the Creation together. So it is, as to the invisible and future things of God and of his Kingdom. There is a certain Subordination and Connexion of one to another, or one goes before another, and so indeed there is of all the Graces and Gifts of the Spirit, and of all the Duties pertaining to Religion. As in the Natural Body of ours, there are Ligatures and Strings, Nerves, Arteries and Sinews, Which do hold the Bones and the several Parts together : So likewise it is the very same as to the invisible Works of God, and what pertains to the Souls of Men. In the last quoted place out of the Psalmist it is said. *The Lord will give Grace and Glory*, the one before the other ; the one here and the other hereafter. And as the Blessing and Good Things of God given here in hand, and in this Life are expressed throughout all the Old Testament by the Word *Peace*, that is to say, Peace of Mind and Conscience, of Soul and Spirit. (Which also is confirmed and often mentioned again in the Gospel, with this Addition and Improvement to it. *The Peace of God which passeth all understanding*) What is all this for ? So much promised by God and so much desired by his Saints ? But because that this same thing of Peace was an Earnest and Assurance, a forerunner and certain token of the future and enduring blessedness, which God would give unto them in the unseen State. Now under the word Peace, Contentment is also included and contained ; for they both signify near the same. But only Peace is much more comprehensive and extensive then Contentment. Inasmuch as Peace chiefly relates to inward Spiritual and Eternal Things ; and Contentment is as pertaining to outward and Temporal things. But seeing that to the well Being and Happiness of the whole Man, there must of necessity be a Connexion of all things together, in order to render any one in a Good State and Condition. So that as Grace is a Pledge and Forerunner of Glory, true and perfect Peace is a sure Token of Eternal Salvation : So as it is written, *Who hath Sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our Hearts*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. Even so this Christian Contentment afore-mentioned and afore-treated of is an Earnest and Seal before hand of that *Rest which remaineth for the People of God*. So that in order to arrive unto and partake of that rest hereafter, we must come unto and have Contentment here. *Unto which promise our Twelve Tribes instantly serving God Day and Night, hope to come*, Act. 26. 7. As this is the End of all our Religious assembling our selves together, to worship the Lord and hear his word, to set us one step yet nearer to it ; *So there being a promise left us of entering into his Rest*, If you would indeed not come short thereof but enter therein, you must of necessity do all the Mean and Preparatory Acts towards it. See therefore well to it, that ye have either Learned already, or do for the time to come, *Learn in whatsoever State ye are in, therewith to be content*.



T H E

Necessity of Keeping still unto

T H E

*Ordinances of Religion,*

Prayer, Hearing the Word,  
Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Set forth in a

S E R M O N

Preached in the Countrey on  
*Acts VI. 4.*

Wherein also is laid open, and manifested the Errour of those People (commonly call'd *Quakers*) who do neglect the two latter.

*Whoſoever therefore ſhall break one of theſe leaſt Commandments, and teach Men ſo, he ſhall be called the leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven, Mat. 5. 19.*

London, Printed, and are to be ſold by *Ralph Simpson*, at the *Harp* in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*. 1698.

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*But we will give our selves continually to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word, Acts VI. 4.*

**I**N order to serve God *unto the saving of the Soul*, and to continue and Persevere in Godliness and well doing unto our Lives End, It is necessary to keep still unto the Ordinances of Religion; I do mean, the several Acts and Parts of Worship, as *Prayer, Hearing the Word, Baptism* and the *Lords Supper*, as they are used in the reformed Churches, By the Congregations and Assemblies of Gods People, *Who Worship him in Spirit and in Truth*.

The necessity of keeping still unto them, In order to make a continuing and persevering work of it, will hence appear, because it is certain that each of us, and every one of us shall so long Persevere in the Worship and Service of the Lord, according as we use the means of Perseverance. Now these Ordinances are the means of Grace and Perseverance, which last is a well grounded Hope of Glory.

Suppose a Man who hath been many years advancing in the Christian Life, another *Mnaſon*, an Old Disciple, who hath come up to the higher attainments of Christianity, and some degrees towards Perfection, ( for this is the meaning of that Commandment of Christ unto his followers, *Be ye Perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is Perfect*; That we should still endeavour and make towards Perfection, although it is impossible for Man here in the Body to be so perfect as God is. Suppose one that were Dead to sin and mortified to worldly Affections, Who hath all faith and all Knowledge of Spiritual things; If this Person should, as he might if he would, but God forbid that any one should make the Experiment, Neglect for some while to offer up any Prayer at all, hearing or read-

ing of the word, he would have no consideration of his ways, nor admit any thoughts of God, but he leads such a kind of life, as the wicked, sensual, worldly and ungodly Man doth for a Week or a Month together ; Even this formerly Godly and Gracious Soul would become such an one himself, as the other is hardened, stupid, backward, unaffected, and in a manner Reprobate to every good word and work.

*And my People are bent to back sliding from me, Hof. ii. 7.* For there is a deceitfulness of Heart, and Corruption of Nature from within, and also the Temptations from without ( as all things are full of Temptation ) which would soon betray us into sin and forgetfulness of God, unless prevented by those Means and Ordinances which himself hath instituted. What the Apostle saith in another case may be applicable unto this. *For the Sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the Grass and the Flower thereof fadeth, and the Grace of the fashion of it Perisheth.* So likewise should we be apt to fade away, even in our Good ways. For the manifold Sollicitations and Objects of the World, that Men pleasing, the Allurements of Company, are all apt to draw or turn aside from God and the thing that Good is : But the keeping still unto the Ordinances of Religion, doth remind and bring us unto them again, which if we did not resort unto, *our Back slidings would be increased*, till they did come to an utter and final Apostacy, as we may perceive by the Working and Tendencies of our own fleshy and corrupt Nature, as also from the many Ensamples of others, who have *For-saken God and Loved this present World.*

It can hardly be expressed how averse Mans Nature is unto God, and to the things of his Kingdom ; how hard it is, to *cleave unto him with full purpose of Heart*, according as he requires, and how easy it is to fall away and turn aside. It was just now quoted what God saith in *Hosea, My People are bent to Backsliding* : He doth not there so much mean the sinners and ungodly, but his Saints and Servants. *My People* have a Proneness and Liableness unto this thing of *Backsliding*. Look within your selves as ye read this, and do ye not perceive somewhat thereof in your own selves. Which the word of God doth mention and take notice of, in order to Caution and Arm your

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minds against the same. *For Israel* (that is a word, signifying his own People again) *Slideth back as a Backsliding heifer*, Hof. 4. 16. But besides those little inclinations towards Backsliding in us, Man in his Natural condition is altogether addicted to sin and falling away. *But they like Men have transgressed the Covenant*, Hof. 6. 7. It was like them, and such as could be expected from them. Now a Backsliding is as it were a little trip, and is not altogether so bad as a fall, or a falling back, or a falling away. Or a turning aside, or out of the way, or a going back. But here is to be observed, that the Word of God takes notice of every least *Backsliding*; for it hinders or retards, or they do not go on so well in the way to Heaven as the Lord would have them, and guide them and hold them up by his right hand. We say in the Proverb, *It is a good Horse that never stumbles*, but it is a very good Horse that never so much as trips; for there is hardly such an one to be found. And so it will be in the Account and Estimation of God, that Man or Woman walks well enough in his way, who doth never stumble or fall therein; and if when he falls, he doth get up again. Our Gracious God calls upon *Israel, Return for thou hast fallen by thine Iniquity*. Yea, if they are gone back or aside, if they will still return again into the right way, he will accept thereof. *Thus saith the Lord, shall they fall and not arise? Shall they turn away and not return?* Jer. 8. 4. And so when the Creature is walking and moving on in the way of his Commandments, when there are Backslidings, God doth in no wise allow thereof, but complains of it. Although he would not altogether discourage his Poor Creature neither. So that *the Law of God is Perfect, converting the Soul*. It doth chalk out the highest degrees and measures of perfection, altho Mans Impotency, weakness and feebleness doth not attain unto it. That is a Good Son and Servant indeed, who can say in Truth unto God our Heavenly Father, and not so much by way of Boasting unto their fellow Creatures, *Loe these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy Commandment*, Luk. 15. 29. Such a thing perhaps may be possible as to our Fathers or Masters according to the flesh: But *David* prays by the Spirit when he saith, *And enter not into Judgment with thy Servant*; for

*in thy sight shall no Man living be justified*, Psal. 145. 2. When God comes to enter into Judgment, and to bring to remembrance all the steps of our course here on Earth, I believe there will not be found any Man ever living (whatsoever some pretend unto or say, but herein they are guilty of falshood, which is a fall) except Jesus Christ the righteous who was more then a Man) who was not guilty of some fall, or at least of a Backsliding; yea, of several and of many. But they will be pronounced to have been the best Sons and Servants, who in their course through this Earth, had the fewest Falls. and the fewest Backslidings, and in the least instances. My Business in my Preaching unto ye is, to direct ye all a long so to walk that ye may please the Lord. Accordingly, I having warrant and Ground from his Word so to do, I testify against all Backslidings, yea, and the least Backslidings. O do not that abominable thing which I hate. Nor yet do ye give way willingly unto the least Backslidings, which the Lord is displeased with and doth not approve of. Though after all your Circumspection, and taking heed which should be yet more then it is considering how things stand; ye have fallen into some Backslidings in your Past Life, and it is odds, but ye will fall into more before ye die. Though in Gods Gods Name and for your own Souls Good, do whatever ye can to avoid them. *This I teach and affirm constantly*, and I do here put ye in mind of the Apostles Exhortation and command, *And having done all to stand*. I say again; *And having done all to stand, and let him that standeth take heed lest he fall*. I will go on to add yet further, if any should be overtaken with a fault, or fall into a sin, let him cry mightily to God for Pardon and Strengthening Grace: Put forth all thy Strength and Power to get out of it, and rise up again as soon as ever thou canst. *Thus saith the Lord, Shall they fall and not arise? Shall they turn away and not return?* Temptations do beset Good and Godly People, as well as the mixt Multitude of the World. Yea, rather Satan is most busy with the first, and serves greater ends upon them if his Temptations should take effect, he having already taken the latter sort *Captive at his will*. There is a like old corrupt Nature in all, although it is kept under and subdued in regenerate People, which doth actuate and prevail and rule all in all, in the Children of Disobedience.

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obedience. *And the Lord said unto Moses, Go get thee down, for thy People which thou broughtest out of the Land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I have commanded them, and made a Molten Calf and Worshipped it,* Exod. 32. 7. And so when the Lord writeth up the People of the several Generations and Countries. He shall count and rehearse at the last day, how they have turned aside quickly out of the way which he had commanded them. Not only in making and sacrificing unto other Gods (which is a most grievous evil and abominable Idolatry) but in the Breach and Transgression of the other Commandments also. He did set them aright once and again, but they would and did quickly turn aside out of the way which he had commanded them. As we read or hear of this in others, we are to remember and take heed, we are to fear and watch; for we have the same or like hearts; which if they do not break out quickly into actual turning aside, yet we are subject unto, and it is possible, we may quickly fall into the same. There is a Proneness, woulding, and Inclination to the same sin and evil. *Know ye not that the Spirit which dwelleth in us,* (He speaketh there in the Person and behalf of Christians) *lusteth to envy.* Now when one lusteth to a thing he would fain be at it, but he knows not whither it would be best for him. He hath some looking back towards Sodom. *Remember Lots Wife.* For we are forbidden, even these same lustings and covetings after worldly things, and secret desires after those things which are not to be had without the hazard of the seekers thereafter for all Eternity. *So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain, which taketh away the Life of the owners thereof,* Prov. 1. 19. Like as David longed, and said, *Oh that One would give me to drink of the Water of the Well of Bethlehem, which is by the Gate.* Now as to all these, the Word of God which is very pure, doth forbid all those Lustings and Covetings, and Concupiscence. It requires to crush the Cockatrice Egg, that it break not forth into a viper; *To dash the little ones against the Stones;* Not only to abstain from all appearance of Evil, but to nip and destroy it in its rise and beginning, when it doth in the least appear above Ground. *O Jerusalem wash thine heart,* (there is the

Fountain and Spring, and it is good going to the bottom) *from wickedness that thou mayest be saved,* ( By this it appears, that there is more requisite and necessary to salvation then many People are aware of ) *How long shall thy vain Thoughts lodge within thee ?* Jer. 4. 14. *How long shall it be ere they attain to Innocency ?* Hof. 8. 5. By which place it appears, that it is the mind of God that there should be a prelling forwards, and a going towards, and an endeavour after Innocency ; Though if one had the Tongue of Men and Angels : If he had all knowledge and utterance in the Law of God and Heavenly things, how long do ye think he might Preach to a Congregation ere They attain to Innocency, considering Men as they are. I suppose, he might Preach all his own life long, and to their lives end before they all attain to Innocency. Though withal, if he is faithful in his ministry, to which the Divine Blessing and Promise is Annexed, it will be Instrumental towards the making some therein, *a People prepared for the Lord.*

*But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all Men, and needed not that any should testify of Man; for he knew what was in Man,* John 2. 23, 24. Now we learn from John 1. 1. That Jesus was the Word of God, and the Word was God. *All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* Man himself was created and made by the Word. So that by the rule of consequences, if all Men were Created by the Word, as they were, then of necessity the Word must know all men, and know what is in man. There went no more towards the creating the whole World, and all things therein, than God's saying, *Let it be so* (which is his Word), *and it was so.* As the Word of God did create us at first in a littleral and material sense, so the same Word is to make us *New Creatures* ; to create us again in a spiritual sense ; to make us *live unto God for ever and ever.* And in order to that it knows all men, and knows what is in man ; and needs not that any one should testify of him, for it knows enough of it self. The Commandments, Rules and Directions are given in that wise, according as Man is Prone Subject and Inclenable unto. There are more then a Thousand Instances of this, throughout the Book of the Lord. But I will recite one or two, *Only take heed to thy self and keep thy*  
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*Soul diligently, least thou forget the things which thine Eyes have seen, Take heed unto your selves, least ye forget the Covenant of the Lord your God, Deut. 4. 9, 23.* The Holy Ghost, by giving this double caution in this Chapter doth denote and shew forth, what Men are apt and subject unto, even to the forgetfulness of the Works of God and of the words of his Law, for themselves to live according unto, and to obey it, and therefore he warns them against it: Now the several Acts and Parts of Worship are in a manner Visible, and also they put in continual mind both of the works of God, and of the words of God. And for this reason, besides his own Command of Enjoyning them, they are to be retained and resorted unto all the days of our Life, whilst we are here in the Body.

*O Ephraim, What shall I do unto thee? O Judah, What shall I do unto thee? For thy Goodness is as the morning Cloud, and as the Earthly Dew it goeth away. Hos. 6. 4.* As it is written, *Jesus Christ spake thus unto Philip, Proving him, for he himself knew what he would do, John 6. 6.* Even so God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, doth here ask the same Question doubly over, proving his People, or putting them to it; for he himself knoweth what he hath to do and would do herein; How, that when their *Goodness is as the morning Cloud, and as the Early Dew it passeth away*; He hath provided that it should be renewed and come and succeed again, even by the Ordinances of Religion, which himself hath ordained and instituted. I have several times thought, how that in the long days in the hot and sultry weather, when is the scorching Sun, How the wisdom of God doth then provide for the Earth. For whereas, at this time of the Year, there is little or no Rain for several weeks together; If it were not for that Dew which God doth then send every Night and Early in the Morning, what would the Earth come unto? The most fruitful Ground would become like the Barren Mountains, and the *Waste howling Wilderness*. The Heaven that is over our head *would be Brass*, and the Earth that is under us, *would be Iron*, Deut. 28. 23. There would be little or no Grass to be seen. But the Sun in its full might and strength would scorch and burn it up. But now, (blessed, and ever blessed be our God for it) by means of the Dew  
which

which commonly carries on the Earth, until the Ninth or Tenth hour in the morning, It is refreshed instead of Rain; and thus it comes to pass, that it is neither barren nor unfruitful. The observation is common, that in Cloudy weather, or when it will Rain that day, there is usually less or no foregoing Dew. The Knowledge and Wisdom of God, seeing that there will not be altogether so much need of it then, and accordingly he doth so proportion it out, who doth all things in Number, Weight and Measure. *O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all.* And so even now Thou, who *upholdest all things by the Word of thy Power*, In wisdom dost thou govern and dispose of all things throughout the whole World. O that when People walk out early in the morning, and see the Dew lie as the *Small Rain upon the tender Herb, and as Showers upon the Grass*, (Every little drop whereof doth more Good, and therein is more valuable then so many Pearls) would eye and see the Lord therein, and Praise the Lord for his Goodness, and declare his wonders unto the Children of Men. That they would further make known a Spiritual use and improvement hereof, as the whole Face of the Earth unless for this Dew, would be like unto a Path or Road which Man or Beast continually goes on, or at least it would be barren and unfruitful. Even so in like manner Mine own heart, and the other hearts of the reasonable Inhabitants of this Earth, unless it were for the Dew of the Word and of Prayer, would become barren and unfruitful in the work of the Lord, and in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But on the other and better hand, the constant Dew of the Word and of Prayer (if we do not put them from us but have recourse thereunto) for the Lord doth hold them forth and Command the Inhabitants of the Earth to use them, and receive the benefit of them; If these be sought and had daily; If this *Knowledge and Godliness* (which last includes both the Word and Prayer, and these things be in you and abound) (there is Great Emphasis in that Word, full measure and running over, which teaches us that we should do it still more and more. *Every Branch that beareth Fruit, he purgeth that it may bring forth more Fruit, John 15. 2. They make you that ye shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the Know-*

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ledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. 1. 8. Who saith, *Herein is my Father Glorified that ye bear much Fruit, so shall ye be my Disciples*, John 15. 8. But as without the Dew or Rain, there would be no Fruit or Grasse, so without hearing or reading the Word and Prayer, there would be no Fruit brought forth unto God. And if God is Glorified when his reasonable Creatures bring forth Fruit, then by the Rule of Contraries he is dishonoured when they bring forth no Fruit, or when he fails and is disappointed in his Expectation ; *When I looked that it should bring forth Grapes, and it brought forth Wild Grapes*. And what is the consequent of all ? Poor Creatures, the greatest loss will rebound to themselves at the last, altho' now they do not thoroughly consider thereof. *And now go to, I will tell you what I will do to my Vineyard, it shall be trodden down, it shall not be Pruned nor digged, but there shall come up Briars and Thorns. I will also command the Clouds, that they Rain no Rain upon it*. For the Earth which drinketh in the Rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth Herbs, meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth Blessing from God ; But that which beareth Thorns and Briars is rejected, and is nigh unto Cursing, whose end is to be burned, Heb. 6. 7, 8. As the Earth drinketh in the Rain, so Almighty God doth require of the Inhabitants thereof, that they should drink in, hear, and receive his word Preached.

And he having in his Eternal Providence opened a Door in this place where we now are, he doth require of the Inhabitants of this Town and Neighbourhood to come for to hear the same. And I declare to them all that he will call them to an Account for their refusal, or neglect to do the same. I warn them beforehand, that then the false Surmises and Reproaches of some concerning the Minister, nor yet will the vain and frivolous excuses of others avail, as to that God with whom we have all do. As to those false Surmises and Reproaches, they might do as He did in reference to *Hannah*, whom he first supposed drunken, and afterwards enquired further, and then he understood and said, *The Lord grant thy Petition*: So they might come to my self immediately, to be thoroughly satisfied of their present mis-understandings. And let their own Consciences try, bear Witness and Judge, by hearing of the same ; whether the *Way of God, is not taught here in Truth*. Here

There is a very near resemblance and similitude to the Word preached unto the reasonable Inhabitants thereof, and to the Rain or Dew descending upon the Earth ; for as the Rain makes the Earth fruitful, so the Word preached, if it is drank in, as the *Earth drinketh in the Rain*, if it is *mixed with Faith in them that hear it*, will make men and women meet and prepared for God, and meet to receive a Blessing from God. *My Doctrine shall drop as the Rain, my Speech shall distil as the Dew, as the small Rain upon the tender Herb, and as the Showers upon the Grass, Dent. 32. 2.* Otherwise the manifold Solicitations and Objects of this World, would be apt to scorch, and make us fade away, even in our good ways. But that the Doctrine, and Speech of the Word (like *Rain, Dew, small Rain and Showers*), whereby also is to be seen, that the Word should not be only preached once and away, but day after day, and Sabbath after Sabbath ; for there is a daily succession of Dew, or of Rain, small Rain or Showers, to do most good : and then it is when the Word is constantly preached, and constantly attended unto, and received in ; then it renders the Vineyard meet for our God. If his Word falls upon the *Dust of the Wilderness*, (it is *Jeremiah's* Phrase) or upon *stony and dry places*, *Mat. 13. 5, 6.* (I wish that the hearts of none who shall hear or read this be that Dust of the Wilderness, or stony and dry places) then it may seem lost and ineffectual, not for want of Worth and Excellency in it self (for it is the same Rain that falls there, as that which falls upon good ground), but the Incapacity is in the Subject. It doth *not profit, not being mixed with Faith in them that hear it* : Or they suffer it to run off again, as Useless Water. They do not drink it in, as the Earth drinks in the Rain. O that some of ye here present, would drink in this Sermon. Take my word for it, if ye would drink it in, it would abide longer with ye, and do ye more good than that drink which perisheth in the Draught ; or that strong drink which if immoderately taken in, *shall be bitter to them that drink it*. Not so much as to those Qualms of Conscience, or Head-Ach, which do quickly ensue thereupon. But the worst Bitterness will be in the End, when they must *taste the Bitterness of Death*, and thence be called to Judgment to receive a due

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*Reward* for the Sin and Evil of their Drunkenness in the days of their flesh. I would have ye drink that in not one drop further then barely for Thirst and necessary Refreshment. But if ye would taste, and drink in some of those words as are written, by God's blessing, and improvement thereon, it may become in ye *a well of water springing up unto Eternal Life, John 4. 14.*

In a dry Summer, that is good and convenient ground which lies next to a River or Brook, or Fountains which are perpetually running and springing; and when there are apt Floodgates and Instruments, to let the water over the ground and drain it again; This supplies and makes up from beneath, for the Dew and Rain which comes from above. And so it is convenient in dwelling houses, to keep water always by one. Even so we should be always furnished, (unto which the word Preached doth help us) with the like Spiritual Water, as it descends from above, in the Dew and Rain of the Ordinances. And when we have drank it in, we should not let it run through but stop and keep it there, that it may be turned and converted into our own Moisture. *For the word is nigh thee, even in thine heart.* See to it well, that by Pondering and Remembrance of what thou hearest or readest, *These words that I Command thee, thou shalt lay up in thy heart*; That it may become as it were a repository of gracious Words and Divine Truths. Which like Pools or Rivers of Water will refresh and supply thy need at any time. *For they drank of that Spiritual Rock that followed them* (in the Margent there it is, went with them) *and that Rock was Christ, 1 Cor. 10. 4.* So that it is to have Christ, who is the word, formed within them; that he may follow and go with them whithersoever they go, or wheresoever they are. This will be yet a more lasting and abiding thing then the Early Dew or the descending Rain, for that is not always. But to have the *Spiritual Rock following us*, or going with us, this is at Midday and Afternoon, and at those times when there will be no Rain. The word is not, nor can be well Preached always; but this supplies and helps for that in the Intervals and spaces of time between it, even to have a Spiritual drink always within us, and to have a Spiritual Rock following and going with us, which Rock is Christ, out of which

which we may draw and drink at any time, whensoever we will.

As one of the Antients said, *Nothing is so worthy of God as the Salvation of Mankind*; So it is a most wonderful thing to consider, how he hath consulted, contrived and provided all things for it. In his word) especially, and also in his other doings and dispensations towards the Children of Men. Happy, thrice happy, and only happy are those his Servants and Creatures, who know (that is not all) but also comply therewith. *That as deep calleth unto deep, at the noise of thy Water Spouts*, Psal. 42. 7. So one ordinance doth follow another, and one thing is appendant, connected and succeeds another; and all to that great end, to bring about the common Salvation of Mankind, as if God would never let us alone until he hath brought us unto Heaven. On the one hand he is wanting in no means to set us forward; and then again, he is not wanting in any thing to keep us on continually a-going. Yea, he hath ordained further, that we should here on Earth live the life of Heaven before we come to Heaven. *Blessed are they that dwell in thy House, they will be still praising thee*, Psal. 84. 4. And he hath ordered things in that manner, that we may be always a doing the work of God.

And whereas here some would be apt to think that this would breed Tiresomness, he hath again so ordered the matter, by those Ordinances of Religion and Worship, which he hath instituted, that they who herein wait on the Lord, should *renew their strength, they shall mount with wings, as Eagles: they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint*, Isa. 40. 31. For whereas a scoffing Ishmael, and the men of this world, do imagine, or say, We do not like this kind of work, which is never done; but our God, through his most gracious and bountiful Nature, and Doings, hath so provided, that his Servants shall not be weary in his Work, and have a good will therein, signified by that Phrase of *Running*. And if at any time there should be any weariness, because they are here in the Body, and in this Flesh, then they shall *renew their strength*; for *He giveth Power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength*. As he doth that, so where he sees any thing is wanting, or necessary,

necessary, he makes it up, and supplies it. So it is in the  
 forecited place of *Hosea*, where he sees before-hand their  
 failing and Declination, that their Goodness is as the  
 Morning Cloud, and as as the Early Dew it passeth away:  
 How is this to be remedied, *O Ephraim, what shall I do*  
*unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee?* Here God  
 asks Questions of his Creatures, as if Himself were at a  
 Loss, or a stand. God here speaks after the manner of  
 men. It is much Lord that thou shouldest ask such a  
 Question; for thou thy self knowest better than *Ephra-*  
*im* or *Judah*, or all the Reasonable Inhabitants of the  
 Earth, what thou shalt do unto them, and what is proper  
 unto them in such a case or condition. Seeing that their  
 Goodness is as the Morning Cloud, and as the Early  
 Dew it passeth away, God hath provided an help meet and  
 Remedy for that, for a Repair of that Breach, even the  
 Preaching and Hearing of his Word (which is one Princip-  
 al Ordinance of Religion) Hereby intimating, that if  
 that will will not do, nothing will do; but it will do.  
 And that this was in the mind of God, and that it was  
 the very thing which he would do unto them, and he  
 thought of when he asked the foregoing Question, is ma-  
 nifest by the words immediately following; *Therefore*  
*(here comes the Reason and Cause for it) have I hewed*  
*them by my Prophets, I have slain them by the words of my*  
*mouth, and thy Judgments are as the Light that goeth forth,*  
*Hof. 6. 5.* Where, by the way, *Judgments* may be under-  
 stood for his Commandments, according as *David* doth so  
 call them in the *119th Psalm*; or rather for his Temporal  
 Judgments on the Earth; and then the sense is to this  
 purpose, That to help, remedy, and provide against their  
 Goodness being as the Morning Cloud, and as the Early  
 Dew it passeth away, God hath adapted the Preaching  
 of his Word, signified by his hewing them by his Prophets,  
 who were the Persons and Instruments employed therein;  
 and also his Judgments abroad in the Earth, that *the In-*  
*habitants thereof may learn Righteousness.* For God would  
 have, and so would do any thing, that the Goodness of  
 his people might continue, and not pass away. Though  
 here again, that Goodness which is as the Morning Cloud,  
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Goodness at all, as some Dew is better than none; for this Dew, if it is repeated, and succeeds daily, will do good.

*Therefore have I hewed them by my Prophets, I have slain them by the words of my mouth.* Here observe the manner of the Holy Ghost expressing it. God hath made a thorough Work of it, *I have hewed, I have slain*: For there is a manifest Diversity between that Authoritative and Powerful Preaching of those Prophets, and the flat and insipid Discourses of our modern Scribes and Declaimers, or of Ignorant and Unfaithful Teachers. *Christ taught as one having Authority, and not as the Scribes.* As to this, the Rule is certain, That amongst all that great deal of Preaching which is now abroad in this Nation, that is the best Preaching, and most from God, which hath in it most Authority, Power and Liveliness; for his Word is a Lively Word, and so it will approve it self to the Consciences of the Hearers, where it is understood and managed aright.

In the work of Man's Conversion and Salvation, the Word, and the Preaching thereof are before Prayer. For how shall they Pray, for what they have not known, or for what they have not heard? Now in order to bring God and the things pertaining to his Kingdom, to their Knowledge, as to which hearing or reading is an outward Gate letting in thereto, both the Word and the Preaching or speaking thereof, is not only requisite, but absolutely and simply necessary. And therefore by the way, it would be a good method in the Education of Children, to instruct them with some Principles of the Knowledge of God and of the Doctrine of Christ, and of the things contained in the Scripture according as their tender Years will bear, as the small Rain upon the tender Grass: Before they are taught to say Prayers meerly by rote, or at least to ingraft into them some inward sense and understanding of their own, what they say therein. In those of Riper Years, Knowledge and Understanding should go before Action, or otherwise it will be blind and signify nothing, or not much: Some having constantly used a Course of Devotion, confine themselves barely to that, as such is all the Religion, or more properly superstition of the Papists, as also

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of many Formalists of the National Church. Which Devotion, or Prayer, is but a means to somewhat more, even for Grace and Strength to the keeping the Commandments of God, and to *confirm all the words of his Law to do them*, (as to which Preaching doth instruct and exhort) unto which they should still press forward. But in no wise, as the manner of them is to neglect the needful thing, and principal End of that, only for adhering to a parcel of outward and customary Prayers; for so I phrase it; nor to vilify or contemn the Ordinance of Prayer; in no wise; far be it from me. But only to express it according as it is by them used and made. As also to let ye see on one hand, how the Wisdom of God hath appointed these two Ordinances of Preaching and Prayer, towards the help and furtherance of the Salvation of Mankind; and *what God hath Joyned together, let no Man put asunder*; for he hath commanded them both, and they may be successively used one after another. So on the other hand, when froward and disobedient Man would notwithstanding put them asunder, and neglect the one and hold to the other, then comes in Satan, and strangely befools and deceives people therein. As the Apostle James argues, *For as the Body without the Spirit is dead, so Faith without Works is dead also*; even so here it is. If one should use a Course of Prayer every Evening, Morning and Noon-day, whether it be private, Family, or publick Worship, without keeping the Commandments of God, or having regard to them in all things, and at all times; This would be as Ridiculous, Foolish, and Nonsensical, as if a Servant should as often come to thee for aid and assistance, or for Tools and Instruments to do such a Work, and yet never set about the doing of it. So again, it is a like Folly, Ignorance and Deceivableness, to be Hearers of the Word, and not doers of it. *The Foolish shall not stand in thy sight*, Psal. 5. 5. From which Scripture of undoubted Truth we are given to understand, that they who are foolish in matters of Religion shall not stand in Gods sight; That is, they shall not go to Heaven. And besides that just now here mentioned, they come also among the Number of the Foolish who remember the Covenant in Baptism, and yet

they do not observe it ; or only with slight and tranſient Purpoſes and Reſolutions at that preſent time, when the words thereof are to *Obediently keep Gods holy will and Commandments, and walk in the ſame all the days of our Life.* God heareth not ſinners, *John 9. 31.* And here in like manner it is alledged out of the Scriptures of Truth, that God is not pleaſed with the Sacrifice of Fools, neither will He accept thereof. In the Scripture Notion and Apprehenſion, Fools and Sinners are near the ſame ; for all Sinners are Fools, and alſo all Fools of their own making, as we commonly ſay, who were not born Ideors of meer Natural Impotency, are ſinners: *In that they being in Honour and Underſtanding, they abide not.* They do not improve, but rather loſe that Knowledge and Reaſon in which God had Created them ; This is a ſin and fault of their own in theſe Creatures, when they do not Trade with their Talent, but become unprofitable. And ſo when they loſe Good and Subject themſelves to Evil, as to the future State and Diſtribution of things, this is properly folly, yea, and folly in the abſtract ; and in this ſence ſin and folly are convertible terms. All Sinners are Fools, and all ſuch Fools are Sinners. So Ignorance in Worſhip, or in the things pertaining to God, this is folly ; For let not ſuch an one think that he ſhall receive any thing from the Lord.

Another's abuſe of a thing doth not take away my right-ful uſe thereof. Becauſe another Perſon drinks and is drunken, this is no Argument or Reaſon that I ſhould not drink at all ; for I may drink Nevertheleſs, to quench Thirſt or reſreſh Nature. Yea, I muſt drink, or I Periſh. So it is as to the Ordinances of Religion, tho' ſome abuſe them, yet Nevertheleſs, we may rightly uſe them ; yea, they are as abſolutely neceſſary to carry us through this barren and dry Wilderneſs of the Earth, unto the Heavenly *Canaan*, as drink is to the Body. Becauſe the *Prayers* of ſome People do become *Sin*, *Pſal. 109. 7.* This is no Argument why we ſhould not pray at all. But rather we are thence taught *not to regard Iniquity in our hearts, to lift up Holy Hands*, to purify our hearts, *to ſanctify our ſelves when we draw near to God*, and ſuch like. Becauſe ſo many are hearers of the Word and not doers of it, ſhall

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shall we therefore like the mixt and ungodly Multitude turn aside our foot from going to the place of hearing ? but rather let us *hear and do it*. According to what our Forefathers Covenanted and Promised to God, for themselves and us, in *Deut. 5. 27*. And if we would inherit the promises, we must of necessity be Children of the Covenant. Because some do not know and mind much more therein then the sprinkling or dipping in Water, or do it in General for customs sake, or to make the child or Person a Christian as they say ; we may and ought nevertheless to *fulfil all Righteousness*, and to comply with that Commandment of Jesus Christ, *Go and teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. Retaining the thing, but withal giving most heed to the thing signified thereby. The like figure whereunto even Baptism doth now save us, not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the Answer of a Good Conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, *1 Pet. 3. 21*. If one is Baptized with outward water, this hinders not, but he may at the very same time and afterwards also be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with Fire ; by which last is denoted warmth, fervency and zeal in the Service of God. For as *Peter Answered, Can any Man forbid Water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we ? and he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord. Acts 10. 47, 48*. This Text doth as plainly imply as two and three make Five, even according to the common sense and understanding of the same Words, without any forced meaning, or even any Interpretation at all, that the having received the Holy Ghost or the Holy Spirit, is no sufficient reason and excuse why they should not at all use Water Baptism ; but it is rather a reason that they should use it. For *Peter and Paul*, and other Ministers and Servants of God of Old time, who had the Spirit in more measure then any now adays (Notwithstanding all Boasting and Pretensions) did baptize with water. I would to God, this were thoroughly understood and considered of, by those People commonly called *Quakers*. But they also have that humour and disposition, as to be stiff-necked and perverse, and refuse to hear and hearken unto that part

of the Word of God, which make against their own Imaginations.

The Ordinances are a Part of the Commandments of God, and they are to be used out of Obedience and Homage unto him. God commands us to hear his Word, to call on his Name. Christ commanded his Disciples and Followers to baptize and to *do this in remembrance of him*. These two last, Baptism and the Lords Supper seem to come in the place of the two Jewish Ceremonies, or Ordinances of Circumcision and the Passover; both of which were of Gods immediate Command and Institution. As to the first of which, the Apostle Paul averreth, *Circumcision is nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing but the keeping of the Commandments of God*, 1 Cor. 7. 19. Of which words the meaning seems to be to this purpose and effect, that is, there is nothing, or no great matter, whither the foreskin of ones flesh is cut off, or not. There is no great Good or Evil in the thing abstractedly, whither it be done, or not done. So it would have been, if God had given no Commandment at all concerning it; But God having Superadded and Annexed a Commandment concerning it, *The Soul that is not Circumcised, shall be cut off from his People*; Here it ought to be observed and done by the Jews, as long as that Dispensation did remain among them. Not so much for the thing it self, but to fulfill all Righteousness, and therein to keep the Commandment of God; which same Commandment is now done away and abolished in Christ. And therefore it was become indifferent under the Gospel, as appears by the foregoing verse and from the Practise of Paul, who altho' he was not for bringing them back again to Bondage and to Jewish Observances; yet to please the Jews, as also to bring over more Jewish Converts; who did retain a Tincture of, and Zeal for the Mosaic Institutions, did Circumcise Timothy, but would not do so as to the Gentiles which should receive the Faith. Now the reason is alike and eternally the same, as to those two Ordinances of Christ, Baptism and the Lords Supper. As to sprinkling or dipping in water, and in Eating and Drinking a little Bread and Wine, there is nothing or no great matter in them taken abstractedly. The Reason of Man is apt to despise them, because

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it presently sees no Intrinsick Goodness in using them, and no Evil in letting them alone. And so far it would have been true, if Christ had given no Commandment concerning them. But Christ and his Apostles having given Commandment for the once observance of the one, and the often observance of the other, they ought accordingly to be so observed by his Disciples and Followers, to fulfill all Gospel Righteousness, and out of obedience unto, and for keeping the Commandments of Christ. *Moses therefore gave unto you Circumcision (not because it is of Moses, but of the Fathers) and ye on the Sabbath Day Circumcise a Man, that the Law of Moses shall not be broken,* John 7. 22, 23. This is plain and obvious enough, and accordingly they have been retained all along down in the Christian, yea, and the Reformed Churches. Tho' we cannot here presently assign how Baptism and the Lords Supper are means of Grace, as Preaching the Word and Prayer manifestly and sensibly are. For we know feelingly and experimentally, that Preaching the Word and Prayer are as two Conduit Pipes, through which *Good and Perfect Gifts do come down from above, from the Father of Lights into our Souls.* And we very well conceive how these help to make a People prepared for the Lord. But we cannot altogether give so clear an Account concerning Baptism and the Lords Supper, how they do this, altho' here we can somewhat apprehend as to the things signified by them, which hath been afore-mentioned. Nevertheless, because Christ hath Commanded and Instituted them in his Gospel, it is not only the safer way to use them, but I will go on to add, there can be no safety in neglecting them, or in the omission of them, because of what himself saith, *Whosoever shall break one of these least Commandments and teach Men so, He shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven,* Mar. 5. 19. Which there signifies the Dispensation of his Gospel. For we are not sure, that such will ever be admitted into his Kingdom above at the end of time. Having afore-mentioned what Grounds we have for the same in the Scriptures of Truth; and therefore these things, keep still unto the Ordinances of Religion, *We teach and affirm constantly.*

We read in *Isa. 58. 2.* Of the *Ordinances of Justice*, but in our present and intended Discourse, we wave and let alone all that, it being not altogether so pertinent to the matter in Hand, which is the keeping constantly unto the Ordinances of Worship. For it is a great Gospel Command, *Worship God*, Rev. 22. 9. And to allude unto *Heb. 9. 1.* *This Second Covenant hath Ordinances of Divine Service, and a Spiritual or Heavenly Sanctuary*, Which may be performed in a true and right manner. So that it is meet, requisite and necessary, *That the Children of thy Servants should continue therein*, Psal. 102. 28. Or otherwise, they are no longer Servants of God. *For his Servants shall serve him*, Rev. 22. 3. And as anothers abuse of a thing should not take away my Good and Right use thereof. So here again it is, the Controversies and Questions which are among the Servants of God, concerning the manner or Circumstantials of his Worship, or of those positive Ordinances, as whither Baptism should be observed in Infancy or Riper Years, with dipping, or sprinkling, with the sign of the Cross, or without it, and of the Lords Supper, whither it should be received, sitting, standing, or kneeling, or whither in the Morning, or Afternoon, altho' these are somewhat apt to perplex and trouble the Minds of Christians, and are the occasion of different and distinct Congregations; Yet we should in no wise so far stumble, as to surcease the use of them at all. God forbid.

By the way, tho' we ought to assert the Truth and Confute Errour, yet it is no Christianity to Reproach, or Malign any Sect or Party. *For the Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all Men, in Meekness Instructing those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them Repentance to the acknowledgment of the Truth.*

The much greater Part of those Churches, which are reformed from the Idolatry and Superstition of *Rome*, both in these and also in Foreign Countries, do all unanimously agree, that these Ordinances ought by all means to be retained, and that the neglect, or omission of them is Sin. Certain it is, that the best and wisest way for every one is, To keep unto and observe them, as near according to the Rule and Direction of Scripture as ever they can, and ab-

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I am now going to speak *after my Judgment*, and by *Permission and not of Commandment*; And therefore ye may weigh in your Minds, but not rely on this Affirmation, or rather Opinion, *Viz.* That as the Early Dew which goeth away, is better then no Dew at all. So the observance of the ordinances any of the ways afore-mentioned, seems according to my sentiment of things, to be better and safer then the not observance of them at all. Because there is a Commandment of God and of Christ, for the actual observance of them. Tho' here I charge ye all in the Name of God and of Christ ( and here ye are to take notice of it, that *I speak again by Commandment* ) seeing that these positive ordinances serve also unto the example and shadow of Heavenly things, see well to it, that ye do observe and use them, *according to the Pattern shewed unto ye in the Gospel*: For that is most pleasing unto the Lord, as may be understood from *Heb. 8. 5.*

*Colos. 2. 20.* is commonly objected against the use of ordinances at all. *Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the Rudiments of the World, why as tho' living in the World are ye subject to ordinances?* But it is manifest from what goes before, and follows after that Text in this very same Chapter, the Apostle *Paul* there means only Jewish Ordinances, and such Ordinances as Perish in the using after the Commandments and Doctrines of Men, But have no Ground or Warrant from the Gospel of Christ. But the being buried with him in Baptism, or the keeping the Feast in Remembrance of him till he comes, do not Perish in the using; for they have a Relation to some what further, neither are they after the Commandments and Doctrines of Men, but after the Commandments and Doctrines of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thus ye have been taught, and ye have heard the Truth as it is in Jesus. Remember this Rule and Direction which I *Richard Stafford*, whilst a Preacher among ye, did make known and press and inculcate unto ye over and over, That ye may observe it continually when I am gone, *Viz.* For Gods sake, and for your own Souls sake, If ye would make a continuing and persevering work of it, keep still

and constantly unto the ordinances of Religion. I say and testify again, keep still and constantly unto the Ordinances of Religion.

By the way, Do not think this reciting my Name to you to be odd and unbecoming; for as the Apostle doth several times mention himself by Name in his Epistles, *I Paul do testify, I Paul the Aged*. In like manner I do imitate the same Example, I such an one, a Lame Person (which will be a further sign and token) do so express it on purpose to make a greater and more lasting Impression in your Memories. Remember and obey this saying, keep still unto the Ordinances of Religion.

But as it is written, *We will give our selves continually to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word*, Acts 6. 4. So here take this further advice and direction, be sure especially to keep still and constantly unto these two ordinances of Religion, *Give your selves continually unto Prayer*. And because all are not Apostles, and all are not Ministers, do ye also continually attend upon the hearing of the Ministry of the Word. Whatever ye neglect, do not neglect these two; for these are confessed, acknowledged and agreed unto by all that Name the *Name of Jesus Christ in every place, both theirs and ours*. Even they who pretend to be above ordinances, and to cast off ordinances (that they do err and are deceived herein, hath been made known from the Scriptures of Truth; as God himself will yet more clearly Judge and Determine at the last day) do still keep amongst them in their Congregations, the Ministry of the Word and Prayer. It is possible to *Pray without ceasing*, and to *continue in Prayer*, and to give your selves continually unto Prayer (Good God! How much dost thou delight that thy Servants should continue, see *James* 1. 25. As appears from mentioning it so very often in thy Word) by secret and mental Prayer, by having your Souls always in a frame and disposition to Pray, by praying in the Assembly of the upright, where only Christians are gathered together, and by Praying in the Congregation. Where tho' there may be a mixt Multitude of Saints and Sinners, yet thy Prayers of Faith, and thy lifting up holy hands, will find acceptance with God for all that. Give your selves continually to attend upon the

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the hearing of the Ministry of the Word, Go unto, and frequent constantly the place when and where it is Preached.

Lose no opportunity. Ye can hardly conceive how much I have been vexed and troubled in mind at my doing things by halves, or by my losing opportunities in Temporal and Wordly concerns. For these opportunities slip by, and often cannot be retrieved. But where they may be retrieved, it is always with expence of more time and labour; all which had been saved, if the thing had been thoroughly done the first time. And I somewhat knowing the worth of time, the gliding away of time, and the Irrecoverableness of time, there is nothing which I so much grudge at, as the loss of time. It is a Maxim and Rule of Prudence and Wisdom in things pertaining to this present Life, *To lose no opportunities*. But be sure to lay hold on, and make the most of every opportunity. Much more it is Godly discretion and soul saving wisdom to lose no opportunity, but to lay hold of, and make the most of every opportunity in Spiritual and Eternal concerns. *As we have opportunity, let us do Good unto all Men.*

People should not grudge and think much when they see a Poor Man, or as *Jobs* Phrase is, *Not turn away their Eyes from a Poor Man*. But rather be glad and give God thanks for putting an opportunity into their hands, that they may do good unto him, and lay in more Foundation for their own future reward. For as the Lord Jesus said, *It is more Blessed to give then to receive*. So it is a certain Truth, they that give Alms, have more reason to give God thanks then they that receive Alms, for a twofold Reason, because God hath placed them in such a condition, whereby they are enabled to give Alms; and also because he hath promised a future Recompence for the same and he will repay it. In which last respect they are more beholden to the Poor Man, or Beggar in receiving it from them, then he is beholden unto them for giving to him; which should teach thee to prevent him in thy Almsgiving, even before he asks for it, for this is the best sort, as also to lose no opportunity for the same according to thine ability.

Lose no opportunity in any Godly or Christian Duty. *I charge thee before God and before the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall Judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom: Preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season,* 2 Tim. 4. 1. Under this is included a charge to the People, to hear the word also in season and out of season. It is altogether as proper to hear or Preach the Word upon a Week Day, as well as on a Sabbath Day. It is equally your Duty to redeem two or three hours, from the work of your calling for to attend on the same. Countrey People will rise at one or two a Clock in a Morning to go to Markets, to remote and distant places, to get a Shilling or Eighteen Pence more then Ordinary. This same is a Lesson and Instruction, and God doth expect a like of his Creatures, that ye should rise up a little Earlier in the Morning, and sit down later at Night, and only be a little more Temperate in your Eating and Drinking, for too much Eating makes People sluggish and sleepy. Thus People might redeem time for hearing his word on a Week Day; and yet they would not diminish ought from their accustomed Work, and Labour in their wordly calling.

Sirs, ye know not what it is to lose opportunities in Spiritual and Eternal concerns. For these opportunities can never be retrieved again. As *Nebuchadnezzar* said concerning his Dream, *The thing is gone from me,* Dan. 2. 5. So these opportunities of hearing his word are gone from them for all Eternity. There is no recalling of it back again. I have Preached Ten Sermons to the Inhabitants of a certain Town and Neighbourhood; But if those People, who refused or neglected to hear the same, would now give Ten Thousand Pounds (and if there were Ten Divine Truths in them, they would not be thus overrated, for each Divine Truth is of more worth then a World) for to have heard them on those Ten past Lords Days, this can no more be, then any of them can make the Sun stand still, or go back ten degrees in the Dial of *Ahaz*. It passes over into a thing to be Judged off, at the Judgment of the Great Day. As God commanded *Moses* to make a return, how he had discharged his message, and *Moses* did accordingly *return back the Word of the People*

unto the Lord. So when his Ministers come to give in an Account of their Ministry, it will be a sad reckoning to the People, *They are turned back to the iniquity of their Forefathers, which refused to hear my Words*, Jer. 11. 11. Loe, these ten opportunities together, such and such People hereabouts have refused to hear thy Words, O God; and if I should live or stay among them so long, I do really believe that some of my Countrymen and Neighbour's will, for seventy times seven opportunities more refuse to hear thy Words O Lord, according as I have received the same from the lively Oracles, the Book of the Lord, and what he makes known to my heart by his Spirit.

As *Herod* made a sudden Oath for the sake of which, he cut off *John* Baptists Head. And as the *Jews* bound themselves with a Curse, not to Eat or Drink until they had killed *Paul*: So I believe that some have made such an hasty Vow and Resolution (which is the usual forerunner of foolish and sinful doings) that they will never go to hear such an one. In speaking after that manner they take the wrong end of the Staff by the hand (which kind of speaking, is one method or devise whereby Satan upholds his Kingdom, by fixing on Persons and not on things) for 'tis not so much the Person of this or that Man, we being Creatures of alike Flesh and Blood and of the same Passions. For they should speak more properly and understandingly, they vow and resolve never to hear the Word of the Lord which comes out of such an ones Mouth (for by the way, if a Great Truth of God could and did come out of *Caiaphas* his Mouth, (as it did in *John* 11. 51, 52.) Who had given wicked Counsel, so may some Truths of God proceed through him, who is harmless and inoffensive in his Conversation, and whom neither his adversaries can charge with, nor yet himself is conscious of any known and allowed sin. But here the children of God should *separate the Precious from the Vile*. I would ask such who think that they must keep to their Vows. Suppose that a man should Vow, that he would never worship God, such an Unlawful Vow or Promise, is better broken than kept; and so it is near the same, not to go to hear the Word; for thou shouldest here Repent  
of

of making such a Vow or Resolution, the Observance whereof being unlawful serves only a design of the Devil, to keep thee in the breach and neglect of a Commandment of God, to *hear his Word*; as also it hinders thy Soul from good things. If any should stay at home to Read the Scriptures, or for Family Prayer, or to catechise and instruct their Children, this they might do at other times, and they might bring their Children here to sit down and hear Words Preached according to their Capacities; which perhaps by Reason of their fresh Memories, and tender Years, they would retain longer than their Parents. It may be asked them another day, Why abodest thou among thy Family, or in thy house, when thou mightest have gone out to Hear the word of the Lord? *Hearken unto me ye that know Righteousness, the people in whose heart is my Law; fear ye not the Reproach of Men, neither be ye afraid of their Revilings, Isa. 51. 7.*

Ye may all know and be assured, that the works of God are never in vain. I have several times thought as to my outward Lameness, tho I do halt like unto the Patriarch *Jacob*, nevertheless this hinders not from my running the way of Gods Commandments. And so where God hath furnished any man with Knowledge, Ability, Inward Endowments, and Qualifications, and hath *put good words and true words into his heart*, all this, and such like must be for some end; even for him to speak out and make known the same, and for others to hear and receive them. The Lord will rehearse all this, and much more in the day when he writeth up his people. How every least and most contemptible Creature, did serve the Great Ends of his Glory. But much more the Ministers of the Word do so in their several Generations, Countries and Places. It is indeed matter of Anguish and Vexation to us, because we see the Devils working and Delusion herein, and we can not help it so thoroughly and universally as we would. *It is a day of trouble, the Children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.* Altho' there are too many Loyerers in the Ministry, yet there are not Labourers enough in the Harvett; and they also are not knowing, or not laborious enough. But yet, however people carry it towards us, yet that place of *Ezek. 2. 5, 7.*

will



will take hold of them ; *And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear (for they are a rebellious House), yet shall know that there hath been a Prophet among them. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear, for they are most Rebellious.* And so accordingly, as long as I have health and opportunity, I will speak the word of God unto the people of my Generation and Nation, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, if no more than two or three only did come to this particular place where it is declared. *But to Israel he saith, All the day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gain-saying people, Rom. 10. 21.* Now Israel were the outward worshippers; but the same holds true also as to the sinners and ungodly.

*But Beloved, we are perswaded better things of you, and things which accompany Salvation, tho we thus speak.* For some of ye will hear, and will not be disobedient, nor yet gain-saying. *And we desire that everyone of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of Hope unto the end;* Seeing that our selves are determined by his Grace, the longest day we have to live here on the Earth, to give our selves continually to Prayer and to the Ministry of the Word. See ye to it also, that ye give your selves continually to Prayer likewise, and to attend upon this Ministry of the Word.

As *Agrippa and Bernice did come with great Pomp to the place of hearing,* so do ye lose no opportunity to come with great Reverence, Attention, and a Spirit of Discerning, unto the place of hearing, wherever it is faithfully and skilfully Preached forth and handled. *They came with great Pomp.* But do not Refuse to come to any place for the seeming outward meanness and contemptibleness thereof; for as it is the same Sun which shines upon a Dunghill as upon a Beautiful Palace; as Christ, according to the flesh, was laid in the Manger of a Stable, so the word of God, and the words of Eternal Life may be, and are often more purely and simply declared in ordinary Rooms, than in finer Buildings. Let it meet with Reception in your hearts. Remember the word which I have inculcated over and over unto ye, which doing, altho some may think superfluous, yet to ye it is safe. For the Lords

sake,

ake, and for your own Souls sake, if ye would indeed make a continuing and persevering work of it, keep still and constantly unto the Ordinances of Religion. But above all, and especially, give your selves continually unto Prayer, and to attend upon the Ministry of the word, that ye lose no opportunity for hearing the same. *He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully, Jer. 23. 28.* And in whatever place it is faithfully spoken, and faithfully preached, *even unto his Habitation shalt thou seek, and thither shalt thou come, Deut. 12. 5.*

### F I N I S.

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### *Another Admonition to the People commonly call'd* QUAKERS.

**T**Here are some in these days, who think and say, that all Sermons and Exhortations to abstain from sin, whither secret or open, is but a low degree of the Ministration of the Gospel; and they are apt to Boast that they do Press further and arrive at higher attainments. I wish they did all speak Truth herein, for there are sundry other sins besides Drunkenness, Adultery, and the *Manifest Works of the Flesh*; and it were well if themselves were purified from all them also, especially from *hatred, variance, emulations, strife, heresies, envyings*; and also from all the Perversities and Evils of the Spirit. This I confess as well as they, that to go on to sin and to confess, confess and sin, and so to return again to Folly, (*I will bear what God the Lord will say, for he will speak Peace unto his People and to his Saints, but let them not turn again to Folly, Psal. 85. 8.*) This will never do as to the saving of the Soul, and that it may be received up into Glory. But this is the manner of such Wordly outward Worshipers, who are *Foolish, Disobedient and Deceived, serving Divers Lusts and Pleasures, Titus 3. 3.* And so where any Preachers or Ministers do lead, or allow People in sin, but they

they do not shew the way how they may be led out of sin, there they do not profit the People at all. For that is the saving and effectual Ministry, which actually turns People from Darkness unto Light, from the Power of Satan unto God. Nevertheless where this is done, it is necessary to make mention of Sin, Evil, Iniquity and Transgression, to warn and arm the Minds of People against the same also. Accordingly Moses and the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles, and all the Holy Men of God who were moved by the Holy Ghost, whose Words and Writings are upon record in the Book of the Lord, did speak of and testify against sin. But some in these days, who think of themselves more highly then they ought to think, Rom. 12. 3. Be not wise in your own Conceits, ver. 16. Do imagine that themselves are more Pure and Spiritual minded, and have attained further then to make mention of Sin and Transgression within their Lips. And tho' David, Ezra, Nehemiah, Job, Daniel, and Isaiah, in these Prayers of their own, which are left upon record in the lively Oracles, and had as much, yea, more of the Spirit of the Lord then any in these days, do all make Confession of, and ask Pardon for their Sin and of the other Servants of God. It is both a Pattern, and also a standing positive and express Commandment, which our Lord Jesus Christ, even under the Gospel dispensation hath given unto all his Disciples and Followers; *When ye pray, say, and forgive us our sins*, Luk. 11. 2, 4. And it is again affirmed in the same Gospel, *If we say, that we have no sin, we deceive our selves, and the Truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*, 1 John 1. 8, 9. But I have went several times to the Congregations of those aforementioned, and beheld their Devotions, Acts 17. 23. And observed them, and I never therein heard the least Confession of sin to Almighty God, nor yet asking any forgiveness of him for the same. Whereupon, I can assuredly gather and conclude, *That they do deceive themselves and the Truth is not in them, as to that matter.* And by my Publishing these things to the People of this my Generation and Countrey, I would hereby warn and desire them to take heed, lest what God said to the two Friends of Job

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come upon them also, *Viz. Least he deal with them after their Folly*, Job 42. 8. In that whereas he had commanded and directed all that worship him, to confess and be sorry for, and forsake their sin (*He that confesseth and forsaketh shall find mercy*) and also to offer up for themselves a Prayer unto God for forgiveness of the same. But they did not, nor would not (whither it was out of Spiritual Pride or the Errour of their own heart, God knows) and so their sin is not forgiven, nor blotted out, and then the Lord doth not accept them. And if so, then the Religion of that People is vain, and it signifieth and availeth not to find acceptance, or receive any thing from the Lord.

Indeed, herein they have *spoken the thing that is right*; It availeth not to Worship God, and at the same time to continue in Sin and Transgression; or to confess Sin, and not forsake it. For this will no more bring to Heaven, than only to set ones Foot only on the Threshold, and no further, is Actual Entering into the House. In no wise. But they, and they only are *Blessed that do his Commandments, that they may have Right unto the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the Gates, into the City*, Rev. 22. 14. Such do not always stand at, or in the *Gates*. Which *Doing of his Commandments*, speaks and requires on this wise, *Put away the Evil of your Doings from before mine Eyes; Cease to do evil, learn to do well*, *Isaiah* 1. 16, 17.

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## A SERMON

On 2 Cor. 2. XI.

*Least Satan should get an advantage of us,  
for we are not Ignorant of his devices.*

FROM whence we assuredly gather, that if St. Paul, an Apostle and Servant of the Lord, *who would so run, not as at uncertainty; Who did so endeavour, Least by any means whilst he had Preached unto others, Himself should be a cast-away*, Spake thus by the Spirit of the Lord, this also is written for our Example and Admonition, that every Servant of the Lord who would so run his Christian race, not as at uncertainty; Who would so wait upon the Lord in all his Ordinances, that after all, he should not prove a cast-away himself (for such a thing is possible and to be feared, and care is to be taken against it all our Life long.) He ought *not to be Ignorant of the devices of Satan*; for it is certain, the more we know them, the more we may avoid them, or render them of none effect.

It is said, *Devices* in the Plural Number; for they are more then one. And indeed it is, to be thought, that as *Jesus asked him what is thy Name, and he said, Legion, because many Devils were entred into him, Luke 8. 30.* so all his several *devices* are near upon as many. Now a *Legion* according to that Computation which then was, is Six Thousand, Six Hundred and Sixty Six; which is a great and considerable Number. And if the *devices* of Satan are so many as there are Devils, to treat of them severally, and particularly would make a long and perplex Sermon. I shall endeavour to make known unto ye, what I find concerning them in the Book of the Lord, and according

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FROM whence we assuredly gather, that if St. Paul, an Apostle and Servant of the Lord, *who would so run, not as at uncertainty; Who did so endeavour, Least by any means whilst he had Preached unto others, Himself should be a cast-away*, Spake thus by the Spirit of the Lord, this also is written for our Example and Admonition, that every Servant of the Lord who would so run his Christian race, not as at uncertainty; Who would so wait upon the Lord in all his Ordinances, that after all, he should not prove a cast-away himself (for such a thing is possible and to be feared, and care is to be taken against it all our Life long.) He ought *not to be Ignorant of the devices of Satan*; for it is certain, the more we know them, the more we may avoid them, or render them of none effect.

It is said, *Devices* in the Plural Number; for they are more then one. And indeed it is, to be thought, that as Jesus asked him *what is thy Name*, and he said, Legion, because many Devils were entred into him, Luke 8. 30. so all his several devices are near upon as many. Now a Legion according to that Computation which then was, is Six Thousand, Six Hundred and Sixty Six; which is a great and considerable Number. And if the devices of Satan are so many as there are Devils, to treat of them severally, and particularly would make a long and perplex sermon. I shall endeavour to make known unto ye, what I find concerning them in the Book of the Lord, and according

cording to that knowledge himself shall afford me. All the devices of Satan, may be reduced to these two General Heads, or to these two Principal Intents and Designs which the Enemy of our Souls hath, in using his Temptations or Devices against us.

They are either *First*, To hinder People from coming into the way of the Lord.

Or *Secondly*, To turn them aside, or back again, after they are come into the way of the Lord.

In opposition unto and prevention of all which, the All-wise God hath two Ends in sending forth his Word, and in appointing Ministers for the Ministry thereof; which are the *Converting of Sinners from the Error of their way*, or to bring People over unto God, and then afterwards to *Perswade them to continue in the Grace of God*, Acts 13. 43. Both which good Ends, do exactly Countermine those two General Devices of Satan afore-mentioned: For God our Saviour would as willingly *have all Men to be saved, and to come to the Knowledge of the Truth*, As Satan the Destroyer walketh about as a Roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour; And therefore he endeavours what he can to turn aside, or hinder People from coming to the Knowledge of the Truth.

The first device of Satan, to hinder People from coming into the way of the Lord and how Contrariwise, the Will-dominion of God cryeth out continually unto them to come, we shall not here altogether so much insist on, (tho' abundance of excellent and useful matter might be drawn from thence,) Because it doth not quite so closely and immediately appertain to the Subject in hand, which is the second Particular, *Viz. The not being Ignorant how one Principal device of Satan is to turn People aside, or back again, after they are come into the way of the Lord, is a necessary help towards the making a continuing and persevering work of it.*

It is said in the true Proverb, *forewarned, fore-armed*. And accordingly, having received notice before hand of such an Enemy or Adversary; We may expect accordingly and be better provided to withstand him, or so to order our selves that his Ends shall not be Answered upon us. The Great Captain of our salvation, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, even Christ Jesus hath this manner of

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Speech to his Disciples and Followers, *Behold I have told you before, Mat. 24. 25.* This he spake as to those *False Christs, and False Prophets, which should arise and shew Great Signs and Wonders, insomuch that if it were possible, they should deceive the very Elect*; Which hath been literally fulfilled as to the False Christs, and False Prophets of the Roman Church. For the Priests thereof have pretended to shew *Great Signs and Wonders* by their forged Miracles, which are recorded in their lying Legends; which have been just like a Jugler shewing his *Hocus Pocus* Tricks, in order to deceive People into their Idolatry, Errour and Superstition. And all these (altho' perhaps themselves knew it not, or at least they did not thoroughly consider thereof) were but Instruments in the hands of the Devil, to *deceive the Nations and the World*. Which devices did so far take effect, as to deceive the simple Multitude of the several Generations and Countreys; and even to this very Day, they have near upon as many, or rather more in Number, as the Protestants of there formed Religion are. If these Poor deluded Souls (whom I Pity at my heart) had kept in mind, or had been acquainted with this Caution of our Saviour Jesus Christ, then they would not have so soon fallen into that Delusion, if they had at all. *But Satan working in them with Greater deceiveableness*, kept the Scriptures from them; for the way to avoid any Delusion, which is as a snare, is to see, or have knowledge of it before hand. As we have Christ for our Lord and Example herein, so every Minister of Christ ought to warn the People and tell them before hand what they will meet with, and what will come upon them in their way towards Heaven, and advertise them what shall befall them in the latter Days. *Gen. 49. 1.* For as it is commonly said, If we did know before what would come hereafter, we should never do amiss: So it would be much more as to the invisible and future things pertaining to the Souls of Men, if they were warned thoroughly and did receive the warning. When the Watchman seeth the Enemy coming, he is to blow the Trumpet and warn the People; according as our God hath commanded and directed us of the Ministry, in *Ezek. 33.* And as we come to know the devices of Satan, we are to make them known unto ye also.

*With the well advised is Wisdom.* And People have begun well, when they have resolved so far as this towards Heaven, as to choose it for their Everlasting and Final abode, and to desire it for their Habitation. *For the Lord hath chosen Sion, He hath desired it for his Habitation. This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell for I have desired it,* Psal. 132. 13, 14. Now *Sion* signifies his People: And as there is such a choice, mind and desire in God towards his People: So it is but Natural and Reasonable, yea and his Elect Servants have such a reciprocal Love, choice, mind and desire towards the Lord their God, to be with him wherever he is, rather to be with God in Hell, then to be without him even in Heaven it self, which is an utter impossibility but even to suppose; for wheresoever God is, it must be Heaven and can be no Hell, *In whose presence is fullness of Joy, and at whose right hand are Pleasures for evermore*; Like as there must be of necessity, Light and Heat, in the places next unto where the Sun shines.

I suppose, that most People are bent for God and Heaven in the General, and that they have their *Faces towards Sion*. But I am to acquaint ye, that so far it is well, but this will not bring you thither. I mean, the hope to go to Heaven, and some Endeavours after it will not give you a Footing and Possession in that *High and Lofly Place, the Inhabitation of Eternity*, the place where all Righteousness and Blessedness dwells. For who is there in the General that doth not hope to go to Heaven? And doth not use some endeavours after it. Ye shall hardly find one Man or Woman in Twenty, whom if you ask as much, they will tell you the same. I do for my part hope to go Heaven, and so doth another, yea, and a third, and each doth endeavour somewhat after it. For this makes them go to Church or Meeting about once a Month, or once a Quarter, and to carry forth an indifferent outward Moral, Civil and Honest Conversation towards one another; for they think this enough to bring them to Heaven, and this is their endeavour after it. As I just Name and observe this unto ye, Cannot ye smell out a *device of Satan* herein? Which may by and by a little appear; for hereby he deludes and deceives the People, that less will serve the turn to bring them to Heaven then really will.

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I have much Pondered in my heart, upon *Luke 13. 23.*  
*24. Then said one unto him, Lord, Are there few that be*  
*saved? And he said unto them, strive to enter in at the*  
*strait Gate; for many, I say unto you will seek to enter in*  
*and shall not be able.* Every sentence, Word and Syllable,  
yea, the very Jots, or Points in Scripture are observable;  
for it will be all fulfilled and found true in its Season. This  
I warn ye of constantly, and *Behold I have told you before.*  
In the end of time and in the latter days, when ye shall stand  
again on the Earth, ye shall see it in like manner to be ful-  
filled, and all things to be so as is there written. So here it  
is to be taken notice of, that whereas it is not said, that ma-  
ny will strive to enter in and shall not be able; for they  
that shall strive will indeed enter in, but many will *seek* to  
enter in and shall not be able. Which word *seek*, imports  
lesser degree of endeavour *then striving* doth. And so God  
declares himself in *Heb. 11. 6. To be a rewarder of them,*  
*that diligently seek him.* It is not said of them that seek  
him, but of them that *diligently seek him.* This Point had  
need to be well and thoroughly understood; for as to this,  
is the General deceivableness and miscarriage of the whole  
World, as to their doing enough to obtain Heaven and  
Salvation. There is none in this Nation of riper Years and  
Understanding, who hath not heard of it, and there is  
none who doth not desire it, because of its Goodness and  
Excellency; and especially, because if they are not receiv-  
ed there, they must go into a worse place. And there is  
hardly any but doth something or other towards it; for  
this makes them go to their several Congregations and Pla-  
ces of Worship. Now a bare course of outward and cu-  
stomary Worship and no more, is not striving but seeking:  
But when I see them going by Multitudes, some to one  
place and some to another, and all will not be saved who  
go to Church or Meeting. This is a thing worth the  
knowing who the very Persons will be, and to bring it yet  
closer to my self. *Is it I, that do serve God to the saving*  
*of my Soul?* And another should make the same and like  
application and so a third, *That every one of you, do shew*  
*the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the End;*  
*Till every one of you do use the same diligence, which God*  
*hath promised that he will Reward; Till every one of you*

*Strive to enter in at the straight Gate.* Striving imports in the Original Word to put forth all the strength; for such shall be able. Let any one but do his utmost and his best for God, and such God will accept off. But this is the fault and failure, that People do not their best and their utmost for God: Or, if they do it for a Season, yet they do not continue it; and so they forfeit their own Share and Portion in the Promises. The Scripture hath told us before, how it will be divided and rendred to every one at the last day; and this doth mention several who run, but one obtaineth the Prize. Of four sorts of Hearers of the Word, one only bringeth forth Fruit unto Everlasting Life. *And the Kingdom of Heaven* (which there signifies the outward Exhibition, holding forth, or Dispensation of the Gospel) *Is like unto a Net that was cast into the Sea and gathered of every kind; which when it was full, they drew to the shore, and gathered the Good into Vessels, and cast the bad away; so shall it be at the End of the World. The Angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from the just,* Mat. 13. 47, 48, 49. We read many such like things there, which declare and set forth, how that all will not go to Heaven who talk thereof, or somewhat desire it, or slightly endeavour after it. Altho' they herd themselves amongst his visible Church, and frequent his outward Worship all their lives long.

I have often thought as to my self, when I have heard the Good and Eternal things of God declared and Preached of, What do they all signify and avail if I should not have an Interest and Propriety in them, and if they should not belong to me? When all comes to all, nothing less then this will suffice me, *To be a Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* This is the thing my Soul craves after, and will never be satisfied until it is sure thereof, as it is continually vexed when she meets with things that cross, or hinder her in seeking and labouring hereafter. As Philip said to Jesus Christ, *Lord shew us the Father and it sufficeth us,* I will be bold here to say, that either for God to be shewn unto us, as we may see him through a Glass darkly, of these Created things, or as he is shewed unto us in the Word Preached, Read, or Heard; This doth not altogether so truly, fully and thoroughly satisfy

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tisfy the Soul of Man, altho' it doth a little more when in Truth, and in an inward Witnessing it can say, *My Lord, and my God*, by way of Propriety and Claiming him to ones self. And yet here again, because here there may be some doubt and further thought of Soul, nothing less can satisfy the Soul of Man, then for her to enjoy God in Heaven. And so it is here afore said, *That the Lord hath chosen Zion*, which signifies his People, *This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell for I have desired it*, which implies an Union to him. So the Language of the Creature speaks again unto him, *As the heart panteth after the Water Brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee O God ! My Soul Thirsteth for God, for the living God, when shall I come and appear before God*, Psal. 42. 1, 2. It is evident, that the Soul hath a Natural desire to know God, not in those who have defaced it with Sensuality and Brutishness. Not in those who are Alienated and Enemies through wicked works, but in them who exert the Operations thereof. Who obey and serve their Creator, even as it is meet and right that his Creatures should do. So when the Soul comes to be acquainted with him, she is in Peace. It can be contented for the present, and wait some time for the full Enjoyment of him ; Altho' in this mean while, the *Earneſt Expectation of the Creature waiteth for the Manifestation of the Sons of God*. There are risings in the Souls of Men and Women (a little imperfect measure whereof, they have in this Life towards Communion and Union with their God. As also because we are given to understand, that many will be rejected and cast off from him at the last day, altho' they were his Creatures and the work of his hands, hence doth arise *Great Thought and Searching of Heart*, least we should be of the Number of them.

Well, to help and remedy that, to Encourage People to shew the same diligence unto the full assurance of hope unto the End, I do here make known unto ye, that the sure way to obtain is to have *Faith in God, and to Love him with all our Heart, and with all our Soul, and with all our Strength, and with all our Mind*. There is all the Reason in the World that he should be so loved and served : Never any one that did thus believe and love and serve him, did finally and Eternally Perish. *Moses* indeed came on

Mount Pisgab. He saw an Earthly *Canaan* and never came into it, but now he is in a much better, *Viz.* The Heavenly. Men may be and are disappointed in their Pursuits after Earthly things, altho' they used Diligence and Wisdom, and were ready to lay hold on them. But none that doth so as to Heaven, who hath the *Hope which enters within the veil*, and such a sight thereof as to overlook present things, who takes up this firm, constant and continued resolution, for that will I labour and care all the Days of this Life of Vanity. Whatever I take in hand, or whatever my hand finds me to do, I will bring it all in tendency, subordination and subserviency thereto, or otherwise I will never do it : None such who do thus, shall miss thereof. *Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know, that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord.* Here again observe, it is called *Labour*; for this imports a great deal more then that careless and customary Religion of the Multitude. But when it is made a matter of *Labour* and *Striving*, and it becomes the constant and only business of all our Life long ; When the *Life which we live is by Faith in the Son of God*, That is, when that Faith doth so actuate us thoroughly and wholly, all one, as the Soul doth actuate the Body in order to Natural Life, to such the Word and Promise of God, stands engaged, that they *shall not Labour in vain, nor yet seek his Face in vain* ; But they shall obtain that which they seek after, *viz.* The Enjoyment of God, and a Mansion in their Fathers House in the highest Heavens.

It is a great and observable Scripture, *Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the Election hath obtained it, and the rest are blinded, Rom. 11. 7.*

There is many such a thought in Godly and Gracious Souls, like unto that of *David*, who after that, he had received the Promise of being King over *Israel*, could say, *I shall fall one day by the hands of Saul.* And so to whom pertaineth the *Adoption, the Covenants and the Promises* ; Yet there is in them a secret distrust and mis-giving of heart, *I shall fall one day into the Paws of the Roaring Lion, who walketh about continually, seeking whom he may devour.* Notwithstanding, I have already done and yet do so much in order to God, I may be a cast-away for all

all that. Indeed there may be some good use of such kind of Thoughts, to keep us always on our watch, *That we may not be high minded, but fear ; and to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling ; and there being a promise left us of entering into his rest, to fear, lest any of us should come short of it.* And as when *David* spake thus of himself in reference to *Saul*, he did all that same time endeavour to flee from, avoid and fortify himself against *Saul*. So tho' we have at some times doubtful thoughts, least he should prevail and get an advantage over us, at the same time, *we do not give place to the Devil*, Eph. 4. 27. *We resist the Devil and he will flee from us*, James 4. 7. Then there can be no Great matter of Inconvenience, (but rather good doth arise thereby) in thinking the worst, as long as we act to the best in avoiding and arming our minds against his Temptations. We had need be upon our continual Watch and Guard, *Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the Devil, as a Roaring Lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour, whom resist stedfast in the faith.* He is more cunning than any of us, and holds almost all Men and Women by one catch or another, either in the allowance of some sin, or in the Omission of some Duty, or to tempt them to leave off from their waiting and close adhering unto the Lord. *Now the Serpent was more subtle than any Beast of the Field, which the Lord God had made.* Mark that well, and so he continues at this day to be more subtle than any Man or Woman considered in their meer Natural condition, abstracted and separated from the assistances above, the Directions of the Word and Spirit. And so he pursues near the same methods, still to tempt and deceive all Mankind of all Generations and Countries, as He seduced our first Parents into the Transgression, as the same may be read throughout, *Gen. 3.* Even to tempt and beguile them into the Breach, of as many of the Commandments as ever he can, with a pretence that less Evil and more seeming Good, will ensue thereupon than really will. He suggests to do any thing that may displease and lose the favour of God ; and by consequence fall under his wrath and future Punishment. These and such like things are obvious and commonly known already. And so where we Read in several places of Scripture concerning

cerning the *Serpent*, *Satan*, the *Devil*, the *Adversary*, the *Evil one*, the *Great Dragon*; All this is commonly expressed in very plain Words that any one may understand, that it is all meant and intended of him. For whosoever hath constant Recourse unto the written Word of God and doth read diligently therein, he will not be Ignorant of the Devices of Satan. Thus *Paul*, and the Christians of his time came not to be Ignorant of the Devices of Satan, as indeed there are so many things scattered up and down therein which are spoken concerning them, that whoso readeth will quickly find them. *And the Great Dragon was cast out, the Old Serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole World, he was cast out into the Earth. Therefore rejoyce ye Heavens and ye that dwell in them. Wo, to the Inhabitants of the Earth and of the Sea, because the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time,* Rev. 12. 9, 12. *And deceiveth them that dwell on the Earth,* Rev. 13. 14. *And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown, but when they have heard Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts,* Mark 4. 15. Not to multiply many more Texts to the same purpose, we may find and feel enough of the workings and suggestions of Satan within our selves. When at any time we are kept off, hindred and neglect any good, It is commonly through this Temptation and Instigation of the Evil one; as also he doth miserably perplex and deceive in the things pertaining to God. *Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to sift thee as Wheat, but I have prayed that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted, strengthen thy Brethren.* Now this *Simon Peter*, was a Disciple and Precious Servant of Jesus Christ; and from thence we see, that Satan is as busy with the Children and Servants of God, as with other People. Yea, rather more in that, he hath already taken the others Captive at his Will. And hereby also we are given to understand, that God hath reserved to himself the Power over him. He can go no further then God suffers and permits. Tho' Satan for these Five or Six Thousand Years, hath been let loose among the Inhabitants of the Earth, yet God can tie him up again whensoever he will; and he doth walk about with a hook in his

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Jaws to be turned back, or about, whither soever doth please the Great Creator of all things. *But I know thy abode and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy Rage against me ; Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult is come up into my Ears, therefore will I put my Hook in thy Nose, and my Bridle in thy Lips, and I will turn thee back by the way, by which thou camest,* Isa. 37. 28, 29. Holds equally true of the infernal accursed Spirit himself, as it did of *Senacherib, or Rabshakeh*, through whom he Acted. For every Man is Acted either by God or the Devil, according as the thing which he doth, is Good or Evil, Lawful and Right, or else sin : And so it is of all the Created things they have but a stinted and limited Commission and Power given to them by the Great and Sovereign Creator of all things, whither they do obey, or Act in Rebellion against him ; Both which will tend to the Great Ends of his own Glory. God hath suffered such an Infernal and Invisible Spirit, as the Devil or Satan is, to prove the Children of Men more perfectly, to know what is in their heart, whither they will keep his Commandments or no. That according as it is written, *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still ; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still ; and He that is Holy, let him be Holy still,* Rev. 22. 11. *But the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand,* Dan. 12. 10. So these things seem to be suffered, so on set purpose, that they which are good may be better, and so may have more favour from God, and a greater reward to themselves ; and the bad may be worse, and consequently be beaten with more stripes, and receive yet a greater Condemnation. This last seems to be an hard saying, but it is according to the order and decree of God, and according to the Scriptures of Truth. It is evident by the Example and History of *Job*, particularly in the first and second Chapters, that by there being a Devil, and by his being permitted to afflict the Body and Tempt his Soul ; The Good and Righteous are hereby proved, and they will have yet more favour and a greater Crown from the Lord, who suffered it so to be, that the *Trial of their Faith being much more Precious then of Gold that Perisheth, might be found unto Praise and Honour and Glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.* When this *Job* was proved, he did approve himself unto God, What an excellent

cellept Character is that left recorded of him ? That amidst his very Great Afflictions and Troubles, *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God Foolishly.* And how comfortable is that after all, *And the Lord turned the Captivity of Job : Also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job, more then the beginning :* Hereby Confirming what he afterwards spoke by his Apostle James, *Behold we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the Patience of Job, and have seen the End of the Lord, that the Lord is very Pitiful and of tender mercy,* James 5. 11. *Blessed is the Man that endureth Temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them that Love him,* James 1. 12. Happy was it for Job, that ever there was a Satan to torment him ; though perhaps himself could not think so at the very Instant, *For no Chastening, for the present seemeth Joyous but Grievous ; Nevertheless, afterward it yeildeth the Peaceable Fruits of Righteousness unto them which are Exercised thereby,* Heb. 12. 11. For it was made double to him in this Life, and much more will be added unto him in the restitution of all things.

Indeed it must be acknowledged, to speak as a Man, that no one who did thoroughly consider of things, would choose to bear Afflictions ; Trouble, or Loss in his Youth, or in the foregoing time of his Life, if he was sure to have towards his latter days, double, or two fold, as much for the loss he sustained. For Fifty Pounds a Year in Youth, is better then an hundred in declining Years or Old Age, not only because of what *Barvillai* said, we cannot then so well taste what we Eat or Drink. But admit that did remain, yet it is lessened again by having had it over so very often. But the chief Reason is, because of the nearer, yea, the very near approaches of Death ; which then doth cast an Allay, and damp, even upon all the Innocent Pleasures and Lawful Comforts of Life. Which is one Reason why this Age, unless it is attempered with Grace and Knowledge, is commonly so fretful, waspish and froward. But God having here promised a *Crown of Life, to the enduring of Temptation unto such as Love him* (which at this day is made good unto his Servant Job ; for as *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, do live unto God, so doth his Soul also at this very moment somewhere exist)*

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this doth mightily alter the Case, and make those Temptations to be willingly submitted unto; Yea, to become a matter of choice (I had rather meet with trouble in the way of Duty, then to avoid it in the neglect and omission thereof) when these temptations do tend and work together for our Endless Good in the latter End; and herein is that saying true, *It is Good for a Man that he bear his Yoke in his Youth*, Lam. 3: 27. This is a mighty Word of Consolation to me, who have born the Yoke to a Witness in my Youth, whose Life from my Youth up, hath been almost a continued train and series of Afflictions; and I do still labour under Crosses, Oppositions, Disappointments, Vexations and Oppressions. Tho' wishal, (Blessed be his Name for it.) My God hath given me that Knowledge to eye and discern therein, somewhat more then the first outward hand, or next visible Instrument therein. For as it is Written, *The Prophet is a Snare of the Fowler in his ways*, Hos. 9: 8. So I look upon those Temptations as a Snare of the Great Fowler, for the Souls of Men. And as it is again written, *Our Soul is escaped as a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowler, the Snare is broken and we are escaped*, Psal. 124: 7. So those Temptations and Snares, may at first be many times seen, and so passed by or avoided; or if one falls unawares into them, or if like Troops of numerous Enemies, they do come and beset one round, by the help and Grace of God, we may resolutely break through and not be holden by them. We may work through or over, or by the rub and hindrance, so as not to be let thereby: Tho' we may be somewhat hindered, yet not utterly stopped. It is not so much the Children of Men, or our Fellow Creatures which do tempt or torment us, but it is the Devil who Acts through them (from whence, Note by the way, that either to tempt or occasion another to sin, nothing comes so like unto the Nature of the Devil as this doth; as also it is somewhat like him to Vex, Disquiet, or Torment, only for Vexation sake as we commonly say.) The Devil is, the Great Instrument or Engine, which sets all the Sin and Evil, all the Temptations and Pain a working, or in Motion, as it hath been and is in the World. Here God doth superintend and over-rule all, and disposes, or suffers him to Act according to his own Will and Pleasure.

Pleasure. *Behold I have Created the waster to destroy*, Isa. 54. 6. Which *waster* to destroy is the Devil; for he doth raise and occasion all those Destructions, for they do Spring up from him, as the black and corrupt Fountain that is beneath. Somewhat hereof is signified by what our Saviour Christ saith unto the Jews, *I am from above, and ye are from beneath. Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the Lusts of your Father ye will do*, (Observe how it is expressed in the Plural Number, *Lusts*, more then one; as also we hence see that all Lust comes under, and is some of the Devices of Satan) *He was a Murderer from the beginning*, John 8. 44. There are several sorts of Lusts, some of which do immediately tend to Fighting and Murder; and the others do weaken and tend to destroy. He hath his Name in the *Hebrew* Tongue, *Abaddon*, but in the *Greek* Tongue hath his Name *Apollyon*, Rev. 9. 11. Which in the Margent of the Bible there is, That is to say, *A Destroyer*.

Here it is to be understood, that the Devil was a Creature made by God, as may be gathered from *John* 1. 3. *Col.* 1. 16. *Isa.* 54. 16. He is the *Great waster that was Created to destroy*. Like as the fire was Created to burn as well as to warm, so that Infernal Spirit was Created to deceive and punish the Children of the Kingdom and those that does Iniquity, all one, as to prove and try the Servants of the Lord. He hath been suffered to have his Range, going about seeking whom he may devour, and whom he may destroy; To deceive the Nations and the whole World, both as taken together and also in their single Individual Persons. *And the Devil said unto Christ, All this Power will I give thee, for that is delivered unto me*, Luke 4. 6. By whom must this be delivered unto him, but by the Great Creator and Maker of all things, who is God himself? We read exprelly and clearly in the *Revelations*, how that Power is given unto them to do so far and no further, as to one of his Angels, to *take Peace off from the Earth*, and many such like things. By which it may be easily understood and conceived, how that even now God is All in All. As he hath Created all things by his Great Power and Wisdom, so He that *rideth upon the Heavens, by his Name, Jah*, Psal. 68. 4. Doth keep the Reins still in his



his hands, and let them go, or stops, or turns them as himself pleases. This was hinted off before, but it is safe to mention it again, that ye be not Ignorant of the devices of Satan, how far they go and no further, for even as he hath put Bounds to the Sea, *Hitherto shalt thou go and no further, and here thy Proud Waves are stayed.* So it is as to the devices of Satan, and what is consequent to them, the Wickedness, Opposition, or Rebellion of Men.

And after these things, I saw four Angels standing at the four Corners of the Earth, holding the four Winds of the Earth, that the Wind should not blow on the Earth, nor on the Sea, nor on any Tree. And I saw another Angel ascending from the East, having the Seal of the living God; and He cried with a loud Voice to the four Angels, to whom it was given. (Mark that, for unless, God had given them the Power, they could no more hurt them, then I sitting here can hurt the Scaly Leviathan, that is at the bottom of the Sea.) To hurt the Earth and the Sea, saying, hurt not the Earth, neither the Sea, nor the Trees, till we have Sealed the Servants of God in their Foreheads, Rev. 7. 1, 2, 3. And it was Commanded them that they should not hurt the Grass of the Earth, neither any green thing, neither any Tree; but only those Men which have not the Seal of God in their Foreheads, Rev. 9. 4. From whence we see, that all the Actings and Temptations, and Devices of Satan, who is *Belzebub*, the Prince of the Devils; Yea, all the things in the whole World cannot hurt any one, unless God hath before given him Commission and Power, or leave to hurt; as again here we read, That the Servants of God who have his Seal in their Foreheads, are privileged and exempted from being hurt. For nothing can truly hurt them, not Pain, nor Sickness, nor Poverty, nor yet Death it self; for that only brings them to God whose Seal they before had. This is the Heritage of the Servants of the Lord, that they carry his Protection always about them; not in their Pockets, for they may be stript Naked and then it might be taken from them, but in their Foreheads, which is not seen by Mans Eye: So that no Power, or Malice of Men can defeat or annull it. Which Protection runs in this form of Words, *Behold I give unto you Power to tread on Serpents and Scorpions, and over all the Power of the Enemy, and nothing*

nothing shall by any means hurt you, Luke 10. 19. Nothing throughout the whole Creation, can by any means hurt the Disciples and Servants of Christ. No not the Devils, nor yet Death it self can hurt them; but sin only. The Devil can no otherwise hurt any one whatever; but as he doth tempt and deceive them into sin; and then indeed it is, that he gets advantage over them and his devices take effect. But as long as any one doth *not defile his Garments*, Rev. 3. 4. Or as long as he stands upon the Watch, Defence, or at Staves End. Avoid, or get behind me Satan, here let Satan do his worst and shew his utimost cunning, it signifies not. It is Good and Prudent counsel never to stand Parlying, or Discourfing with him, for thus he led our first Parents into the Transgression. But rather to resist vigorously and he will flee from us, and break through the Host of these Hellish Enemies. The more he tempts and the more often we come off Conquerours, the greater will be our Triumph and Crown, and Joy, in the Day of the Lord. For as before remarked of *Joh*, happy it was for him, that there was ever a Devil to have tempted him. So the same will be returned and found true of all the other Servants and Children of God, they will be pronounced and rendred blessed, that ever they have endured Temptation, for then they were tried. But now they shall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him, who in his Gracious, Wonderful and Over-ruling Providence (which signifies providing or ordaining of things) *Will make all things work together for Good to them that Love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

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and so not suffer our selves to be hindered by the hindrance (for I am perswaded and do believe, that if *Paul* had been thoroughly bent and resolved on it for all, he might have went that Journey; Notwithstanding the hindrance of Satan. As a Man may suffer himself to be holden by a single thred or tow, if he doth somewhat yeild himself. The Devils Power is so weak and limited, that if we do resist and not give way, nor yet yeild somewhat our selves; he can never have the Mastery, or Prevalency over us. Give the Devil his due, and let none blame him too much neither, as to say, he doth this or that sin, or mischief, when Men and Women do it by Instigation of him. For as the Apostle *James* saith, *Every Man is tempted when he is led away of his own lust and enticed*: So when any are Tempted, or Instigated by the Devil to commit a sin, the fault and failure of the reasonable Creatures is this, that themselves do yeild and consent to do what he suggests unto them. Which last being their own Act and Deed, thereupon the future Punishment of God upon them for the same is righteously and justly founded. So it will be as to the final Miscarriage and Condemnation of them at the last. Their Destruction is of themselves, although they were snared in it as Birds that were caught in a Snare, *Eccles. 9. 12.* by that great Fowler which hath his Name in the Hebrew Tongue *Abaddon*, and in the Greek Tongue *Apollyon*, which in our English Tongue signifies a Destroyer. Birds and Fishes have that little Instinct, that if they see a Snare, Hook, or Net, they will not willingly suffer themselves to be caught and taken in it. Even so all the Sons of Men have a Rumour of those Evils of the Invisible World, how, *Fear, and the Pit, and the Snare are upon them, O ye Inhabitants of the Earth!* And they might have that Faith, Knowledge and Reason as to foresee those Evils, and avoid them. But if they put off, and neglect hearing the Word, whereby Faith cometh; if they will not Exercise and Improve their Knowledge and Reason towards spiritual and future things: When they are given to understand, and they may perceive from within themselves, that there is a Devil who tempts and would deceive them, but themselves give way and consent unto it. All this is their own fault and wilfulness, for which they

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As also the same is too often seen and experienced, that there is more Hatred, Reproach, rancour and opposition against sound Preaching, then there is against a dead and dull Ministry. There is much more of the Serpentine Nature shewed forth against the Power of Godliness, then is against the form and outside thereof. Here Satan hath Great wrath and shews his Teeth where he cannot Bite, (for God hath limited and chained him) where he sees (as that Infernal Spirit sees and discerns more then we in the Flesh do) any thing that would destroy or lessen his Kingdom here on Earth. One said concerning my self, *That Satan had a great Wrath against me, because I had a Zeal for God, and would seek to overthrow his Kingdom of Darknes.* The Truth of which observation I have indeed felt and experienced; For I have gone through almost all the Shame and Indecencies which are incidental to Humane Nature, whilst I was in the course of my Ministry, which was as much carried on by Writing and Publishing, as by Preaching with a lively Voice. *When thou madest us a reproach to our Neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that were round about us. My Confusion was continually before me, and the shame of my Face did cover me, for the Voice of him that Reproacheth and Blasphemeth. All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy Covenant; (But we have only asserted thy Commandments in the very same manner as thou hast given them, and they stand Written and Recorded for us.) Tho' thou hast fore broken us in the place of Dragons, and covered us with the shadow of Death, Psal. 44. 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19. When thou hast laid me in the lowest Pit, in darkness and in the deeps: Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy Waves, Psal. 88. 6, 7.* Here the Psalmist ascribes them higher then to Satan the Engine of Torment and Persecution, who Acts it forth by Incarnate and Visible Instruments, even to God himself. But as it is elsewhere Written, *Both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and People of Israel were gathered together, for to do whatever thy hand and thy Counsel determined before to be done, Acts 4. 27, 28.* So the Devil and his Legions, and all those People in the Flesh, Our fel-

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low Creatures, they are all but Instruments in the Hand of God. (for the Devil Acted through *Saul* in Persecuting *David*, and through *Herod* and *Pontius Pilate*, in putting Christ to Death) *For to do whatever thy hand and thy Counsell set determined before, or suffered to be done.* And so I look upon all those Afflictions, Trials and Temptations, which have befallen me. As in Good thing, It is not such a Man, but Christ which dwellerh in him, who doth the same: So in Evil things the Devil Acts through them who do Evil. And over and above all things, we may look up unto the Great God. Who over-rules and determines all for the Great Ends of his own Glory. This same Truth is now taken notice of a third time, that ye may understand it aright, and throughly, and bear and remember it in mind.

We should endeavour and order things that our *Prayers be not hindered*, which is done by Roving and Wandring Thoughts in them; as they are suggested by the tempter, who is then busy to spoil and render them of none effect. I have several times apprehended and concluded, that this device must be from Satan the Enemy; and where he would hinder, this must be some good thing, which would have the favour and acceptance of God if it was not hindered; and thereupon it must be Godly Discretion and Soul saving Wisdom, to endeavour as much as you can to the contrary, that your Prayers be not hindered. But attend more diligently on the same; and see to it well, that it doth become an *effectual fervent Prayer which availeth much.* So it is likewise in the hearing of the Word. Satan tryes and endeavours to hinder your hearing. How many doth he hinder from coming to the place of hearing, by putting this little thing, or that little thing into their hearts, either by way of excuse, or obstinate refusal against it? Some vain or false Imagination. And again, those who come to hear, Do they attend upon the Lord, and upon the Ministry of his Word without distraction? Do not some other Objects, or Thoughts, or Observations, take them off at the very time? *Do they give the more earnest heed to the things which they have heard, lest at any time they should let them slip?* This is the very reason, why I do not quote the Chapter and Verse of many Scriptures, lest

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Prayer: When they have heard, Satan cometh immediately and taketh away the Word that was sown in their hearts, Mark 4. 15. As he doth by your falling to worldly talk, or business presently afterwards. Which is just like going from a good fire, into the cold open Air in the Winter time. They do not long retain the heat of the fire, but they are again as chilly and as cold as ever. And so when some have been warmed and heated at this ordinance of hearing the word, they are presently Lukewarm or stark cold again. Satan cometh immediately and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts: When they only pass their Opinions, Censures and Verdict upon the Preacher, as if there was no more in a Sermon then to just sit it out, pass their sentiments upon it afterwards and there is an End. How many of the common People will give such a general Report, that good things were spoken off, and it was all very good and the like; but they cannot remember and carry away distinctly, not so much as one good thing which was there- in spoken of. Whereas if the very same Persons were at the hearing a Play, Ballad, News, or Story concerning their Neighbours, they could bring away the sence of that. The heart of such People is just like a sieve, which lets through the Pure, Solid and Substantial Grain, and they retain nothing but a little dust or chaff. And so on the other hand when they find fault with, or dislike a Sermon; It is general again; I do not like, because I do not like it. But they cannot

cannot assign any particular Reason thereof ; or if they can, it is such a Reason that they are ashamed to own and speak out, because perhaps their Consciences were touched to the quick by that *Word which is Quick and Powerful sharper then any two Edged Sword, Piercing even to the dividing asunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the Joints and Marrow, and it is a discerners of the Thoughts and Intents of the heart :* But Sinners and Hypocrites, and formal Christians do not like such kind of Sermons.

As Paul saith of himself, *Since ye seek a Proof of Christ speaking in me,* 2 Cor. 13. 3. And so he writes unto Timothy, *Make full Proof of thy Ministry,* 2 Tim. 4. 5. So I would to God, that ye my hearers may find the Proof of my Ministry in your selves, if this same *Ministry to you ward is not weak, but mighty in you :* Judge ye in your selves, if at this my speaking and proposing it unto ye, it hath a sensible operation and working upon your Hearts and Consciences, this is a Proof and an Evidence, and a Demonstration, that I am inwardly ordained and appointed, and sent by God for the work of the Ministry. Tho' some, as *those living in the World are Subject unto Ordinances,* Col. 2. 20. Have several times objected to me, that I do not come in regularly, *after the Law of a Carnal Commandment ;* which doth impose and require several things of Mans devising, which God and Christ have not required in their Gospel. And therefore it would be sin, or doubt of mind in me to comply therewith. If such would come to hear, they would perhaps find a Proof of Christ speaking in me ; and that is sufficient to qualify any one for a Minister of the Gospel. But as we are to give a Proof of our Ministry, so I would willingly seek a Proof of my Ministry in ye. This shall be the Proof my Ministry which I would seek of ye. How much do ye remember of the several Sermons I have Preached unto ye ? But if ye have for the time past remembred but little (I am afraid so) I will now put ye in mind of a way that ye may remember more. When thou comest home to thy Chamber or Closet, then write down as much observable Truth as ever thou canst remember. Truly, this was my manner in my Youth ; I did seldom write after Ministers, but in the time of my Youthly Zeal this I would do (which same Youthly Zeal should



be still retained and practised.) As when a Man hath been abroad receiving Money, the first thing he doth after he comes home is to see that it be right, and then he goes and locks it up sure. So after I had been hearing a Sermon, I would forthwith go to my Study and set down the Preachers Name upon such a Text, such a Day; and there write down all the observable and useful Truth, I could remember; and particularly and especially such Truth which was brought new to my mind, whereof I had not heard nor read much before. And this I esteemed to be as well, or rather a better way then writing down in the Congregation, least whilst I was writing down some, I should let slip other things that were then spoken of. But after and amidst all, there is nothing like unto *Writing them in the fleshy Tables of our hearts*, and to get them *Engraven into our inward Parts*, That it may remain and be remembered even as long as our selves shall remain, even until words and time shall be no longer. *But his Mother kept all these sayings in her heart*, Luk. 2. 51. And so if ye can keep the true sayings of God in your hearts, and not suffer them to pass through or slip out again: Saith Jesus unto his Disciples and Hearers, *Let these sayings sink down into your Ears. The entrance of thy words giveth Light and Understanding to the simple.* Now put all this together, where God hath given to any Creature or Minister of his, a Knowledge of his Word and Assistance of his Spirit; and he accordingly being instructed therein, *brings out of his Treasury things new and old*, when these are brought out and Preached forth, if they have an *Entrance sink down into their Ears*, and further, *They are kept and Pondered in the heart*, so kept there that it shall not go from them, here is the comfort of our Labouring in the work of the Ministry, as also the benefit of your hearing. Can ye remember any good and true sayings, or Gracious words that proceeded out of such a Ministers mouth? This or that, he spoke and taught, whilst he was yet among us. I would not require it of ye to remember my particular and exact words, but it is altogether as well, if ye carry away the sense and what it was I drove at, or exhorted unto in such a Sermon; as the drift and design of this my Sermon is, if ye would make a continuing and persevering work of it,

*Be not Ignorant of the Devices of Satan*, and do never give way unto them. I say again, If ye would make a continuing and persevering work of it, Be not Ignorant of the Devices of Satan, and especially, Be not Ignorant of this one particular device of his. *Where the word is sown, when they have heard Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.* Now ye are not Ignorant of this device of his, see well to it, *Least Satan get an advantage over you*, in this particular and in this Sermon. Let him not take away the word that was sown in your hearts at this Season ; for ye may prevent and help it if ye will. That is, if ye keep those sayings in your hearts which ye have heard uttered unto your Ears. And so it is of all his other Devices, they may be Countermined and Rendred of none effect.

Whither it was that the Infernal Spirit did see and discern, that I was to lay open his Devices herein ; But I have observed, that I have been more let and hindered ; I have been more untoward and unapt towards the Compiling of this Sermon then of others ; which yet by the Grace and help of God is brought on thus far : I have observed much hereof, in my Contemplation and Searching out of Divine Truth, how many Avocations, Interruptions and Turnings aside of my mind towards other things and little excuses to leave off, or to go to other Business, have arose and I have too often gave way unto it. Which is my sin and I am to be blamed herein ; and I believe that the Lord will shew himself displeased towards me for the same. When, *He that hath set our Iniquities before him, and our secret sins in the Light of his Countenance*, Will reprove and set in order before me, the several seasons of time I have done thus. As also when I have mispent too much of my Precious time : When I that know the worth of time, the sliding away of time, the Irrecoverableness of time, do not improve it better and more then I have done. The Lord knows the Reason of *my neglecting the Word of God to serve Tables*, Acts 6. 2. To serve the mean necessities of this Life, whereas all things relating to that should be brought ready to my hand, that I should not mis-employ the least Portion of my time, either for Food or Raiment, or necessary expence. And so indeed it would be, if I were righteously and

and equally dealt withal ; If of such an Inheritance which God hath set out to such a Family, a like Share and Portion was assigned to me, as is usually unto others. Or if the same was supplied or helped another way. My Conscience doth accuse me, of mis-pending time about wordly things, or even relating to this Body ; Tho' yet I do not altogether so waste and consume it, neither in Impertinencies or Vanity, or useless things as do others. This is another Device of Satan, to mis-pend Precious time, which we should not give way unto, no, not for a Minute. *For we should not give Place by Subjection unto this Enemy of our Souls, no not for a moment,* Nor yet for the least matter ; But withstand the wiles of the Devil, *Because he is to be blamed,* In that it is a sin and a fault, which he would have us consent unto.

And what shall I more say ? The time would fail me to tell of all his devices and wiles : They do terminate and tend to one of these two heads, to commit Sin, or omit Duty, to Practice Evil, or hinder Good, and by this you may know them. For whatever is of this Nature, that same is a device or wile of Satan ; The same Rule holds and is to be observed towards them all, Be sure not to give way unto them. I say again, to confirm and establish this word, Be sure not to give way unto the Devices of Satan, as each may know and perceive them in the secret and deep of his own heart. And so when we should always keep close unto the Lord God in our hearts, and have them always lifted up towards him, and approach to the Lord in our hearts ; Here when the heart Roves and is far from God, or when it sinks down to the Earth and becomes Earthly or Wordly, or Savours the things of the Flesh and of Men, this again, and such like is one of the Devices of Satan, which we are not to give way unto an hands breadth, but to strive and endeavour against it as much as ever we can.

When Satan stood at the right hand of *Joshua* to resist him, the Lord said unto Satan : *The Lord Rebuke thee O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem Rebuke thee, Is not this a Brand plucked out of the fire, Zech. 3. 1. 2. Even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, Rebuke thee ; which is as much as to say, Inasmuch as Jerusalem signifies*

signifies his Church and People, that God will have his Elect and Servants, *Maugre* and Notwithstanding all the Temptations or Devices of Satan, or the Devil. *And I give unto them Eternal Life and they shall never Perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater then all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Fathers hand,* John 10. 29, 30. Not all the Men upon Earth, nor yet the strongest Devil in Hell. This is a mighty Word of Consolation and Assurance to all Real and Universal Christians, who are within the Covenant. Satan may disturb, but he shall never be able to destroy ye. Tho' *David* did say through Ignorance, Infirmitie and Distrust, *I shall fall one day by the hands of Saul,* but the Lord knoweth them that are his, and I certify and assure all such from the Word of Truth, that they shall never be devoured by this Roaring Lion. Tho' the Wicked and Ungodly, and Sinners may be Snared and broken, and taken, but this is the Priviledge of the Saints and Servants of the Lord, they shall never fall so far into the Snare of the Devil, but they shall be retrieved and recovered out of it again. Tho' here it will be convenient amidst all his Assaults, to lift up ones heart in that Ejaculatory Prayer, *The Lord Rebuke thee, O Satan,* the Lord Rebuke thee; or get *behind me Satan,* or such like. I testify and warn ye again, Be sure never to consent, yeild, nor give way unto his Devices.

Thus having Discourled of what excellent benefit and use, it is not to be Ignorant of the Devices of Satan, and having laid down that Caution and Rule, Be sure not to give way unto them, and then He can never get advantage over us; It remains to shew in few Words, How, the not being Ignorant of the Devices of Satan helps to make a continuing and persevering work of it. This ye may quickly perceive and discern, for opposite unto continuing and persevering, is Apostacy and Falling away. Now the Devil was the first and great Apostate; and himself having fallen into that Transgression, It hath been his continued business ever since to tempt the Children of Men, to fall off from God in like manner. *How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, Son of the Morning?* Isa. 14. 12. Which tho' it be spoken there in reference to the King of Babylon,



*Babylon*, yet it hath allusion unto this fall of the Devil from Heaven. But we Read yet more clearly concerning that matter in *2 Pet. 2. 4.* and *Jude 6.* God spared not the Angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hell ( which doth suppose that it was from Heaven ) and delivered them to chains of darkness to be reserved unto Judgment. And the Angels which kept not their first Estate, but left their own Habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting Chains under darkness, unto the Judgment of the Great day. So that there is more Devils then one, altho' one is *Belzebub* the Prince of the Devils, and is called the Devil or Satan, by way of Preeminency, because he is chief among them. Hence we see that their fault was sinning and not keeping their first Estate. And God having thus punished them for it, they are of the like Envious and Devillish Nature, as to tempt, seduce and deceive the Children of Men unto the like things, even to sinning and not keeping their first Estate, which was Innocency and Uprightness. *He that committeth sin is of the Devil; for the Devil sinneth from the beginning,* *1 John 3. 8.* And as aforesaid, all his devices tend to this, either in single Persons, Families or Nations, or Generations of Mankind, where they come short of what God hath required of that pure and undefiled, Sincere and Universal Religion, the Devil hath an hand in it one way or another; and so he hath in all the ungodliness that is in all People, here some of his devices take effect: So that it is of mighty consequence not to be Ignorant of them.

Every Act of sin is a Part of Apostacy and Falling away, and it is as contrary to the continuing in the fear of the Lord, as darkness is unto Light. So that wouldst thou continue in the fear of the Lord, the consequent is, *sin not,* neither *Give place to the Devil.* We understand likewise from hence how dangerous a thing it is, not to keep ones first Estate. For this was the miscarriage and utter ruine of those fallen and accursed Spirits; and through their means and temptation Man had very near split Eternally and Irreversibly on the same Rock, as appears by our Forefather *Adam.* But that God was pleased (more out of his Grace then our deserving) to establish another and second Covenant, by which he is set up once again, by Christ, to try him once more. But we unto him if he shall then fall and

and break the Terms and Conditions even of the Gospel Indenture. Let People do never so many good things besides, *I know thy Works and thy Labour, and thy Patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are Evil; and hast born, and hast Patience, and for my Names sake hast laboured and hast not fainted.* ( All this is well, and here is a good Character; but what succeeds? ) *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first Love, Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen and repent, and do the first Works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy Candlestick out of his place except thou repent,* Rev. 2. 2, 3, 4, 5. So that it is not a matter of Indifferency, nor of bare complaining to leave ones first Love, but indeed there is a real ground for Fear, and there must be labour to attain unto it again, and do the first works; Otherwise God here declares, that he will *remove thy Candlestick out of his place*, That is, his Light and Grace from out of their hearts; and then in plain Terms there is no going to Heaven, the place of Eternal and Unchangeable Light. Where any one leaves his first Love, this is one of their devices, and comes from those formerly Angels but now Devils, who kept not their first Estate, but left their own Habitation.

I testify again, unto all that shall hear or read this, Be up in your watch and see well to it, that this device of the Evil one doth not take effect upon ye; But rather thwart and contradict them the more. For this is to *bear and to have Patience, and for my Names sake hast Laboured and hast not fainted.* When thou doest so much the more against, or contrary to his Temptations and Devices; for if thou art resolutely given, it may be, Satan will be weary of tempting, or devising devices against thee.

There is so much Reason that thou shouldst not leave thy first Love, that there is all the Reason in the world to the contrary, that thou shouldst *keep unto thy first Love and thy first Estate*, and rather encrease it more and more. Because if you throw up a stone, It is observed that it moves quicker and faster, the nearer it falls down again to the Earth: Which is its Center. So we being day after day nearer to Death and Immortality, and we draw continually nearer in time, when we shall appear before God,  
unto

unto whom all flesh shall come, who is the father of Spirits and the Center of our Souls, and of all Created Beings, *Therefore our latter and last days, should be our better and best days ; Our latter and last works, should be our better and best works.* For saith the Holy Ghost in the place afore-mentioned, *Repent and do the first works,* Rev. 2. 5. *I know thy Works and Service, and the last to be more then the first,* ver. 19. *But call to remembrance the former Days in which after ye were Illuminated.* Recollect and rub up your memories : At what Age or Season of Life, ye were in the very best mind and frame of Spirit towards the Lord God. Where is thy Zeal and thy Strength, and thy former diligence ? *The perpetual hills did bow,* the listings up of thy heart continually towards the Lord God, and thy bowings before him in thy Spirit ; and all that good mind and affections towards God. *Are they restrained ?* Thou must begin again and return back to that former State, and Labour to add to it yet Sevenfold in each particular, now towards the very close and shutting up of thy Days. *And Jehu gathered all the People together unto him, and said unto them, Ahab served Baal a little, but Jehu shall serve him much : But Jehu did it in subtilty to the intent that he might destroy the Worshippers of Baal,* 2 Kings 10. 18, 19. So O thou Man or Woman, pursue here the like Reasoning, in my Youth, or such a season of Life I served God a little, but now I will serve him much ; and yet more, that I may be accepted of him at the last. We are confident I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord. *Wherefore we Labour, that whither Present or Absent we may be accepted of him ; for we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the Body, according to that he hath done, whither it be good or bad,* 2 Cor. 5. 8, 9, 10. Knowing then, that we approach nearer and nearer to this, the right Exhortation and Instruction Prompts to do more Good, and to abstain from all appearance of Evil. And as *Jehu* did utter that lying afore-mentioned, *In Subtilty to the intent that he might destroy the Worshippers of Baal.* So do thou take up the like resolution in good earnest, in reference to the God of *Israel*, hitherto I have served him a little, but now I will serve him much. And thou mayest do

do it in subtilty also to the intent (for so thou mayest by the Knowledge and Grace given unto thee) to be more subtle then the Old Serpent, who is more subtle then any Beast of the Field; Be more cunning, or rather more wise then the Devil himself, as to render all his devices of none effect, to destroy and Root out those Lusts and Carnal Affections in our Members, which hitherto have Worshiped that Infernal Baal, more then our Members and Body did Worship the God of Israel. *For here is the mind that hath wisdom*, and it is Soul-saving Discretion to make his own devices fall back upon himself, that he shall lose more then he thought to get thereby. It sometimes so falls out, that even from the oppositions and resistances of Satan we get more Ground; that the Light which he would seek to extinguish and put out, doth shine more Universally, and is thereupon known more abroad, as when he *shuts up the Saints in Prison*. And so Paul Witnessed, *That the things which happened unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel: So that my Bonds in Christ are manifest in all the Palace; and in all other Places. And many Brethren of the Lord waxing confident in my Bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear*, Phil. 1.

12, 13, 14.

And so it is in other Cases, for the Delivery up into Prisons turns for a greater Testimony, according to Luke 21. 12, 13. if it be for Christ's sake, or for the Word of God. And so it may be in lesser matters, relating immediately to the Souls of single persons. Even the Temptations and Devices of Satan may be over-ruled and ordered, as to fall out rather unto the furtherance of their own Salvation. I speak Mysteries and Foolishness, as unto Natural Men, but the thing is certain and true. As on the one hand, the Spider sucks poyson out of the most wholsom Herbs, and the sweetest Flowers; The wicked, and sinners do draw Evil from the Scriptures, the Ordinances of Religion, and the best of things: So on the other hand, the Godly, and the Righteous, and the Wise, can, and do extract Good even from the poyson of Satan, which is his Temptations and Devices. As it is written of *causing the Reproach offered by him to cease, and to turn his own Reproach upon him*, Dan. 11. 18.



18. So they can even answer the Temptation of Satan, and so even turn that Temptation upon him, as to make the very same an Argument and Perswasion for God and Duty. A Notable Example and Instance we have of this in Christ being *tempted of the Devil*, Luke 4. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10. Whereby Christ did Eminently shew himself to be stronger than he; for when he came upon him, *He overcame him, and took away from him all his Armour, wherein he trusted*, Luke 11. 22. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. And as he is able, so he accordingly doth to all his Elect and Chosen Ones, and Faithful Followers to the World's End. *My Grace is sufficient for thee*. And he gives them a proportionable Knowledge to answer and overcome the Temptations of the Evil One. He continually inspires into the Hearts of his people Thoughts of Good to defeat the Suggestions of Evil.

There is no Reason why any one should not keep his First Estate, or leave his first Love. Have a care of that. He that despises small things, shall fall by little and little. The least sin is like a spark of Fire in a Thatch. We know not how far it will go, and how great a matter it will kindle. The best and surest way is to put it clean out, and extinguish it quite. To *dash the little ones against the Stones, and to crush the Cockatrice Eggs*; Even to mortifie those Beginnings and Tendencies to lust that are in our Members, To come up to that Estate which may be done, *As for our Transgressions thou shalt purge them away*, Psal. 65. 3. As an healthful and sound Body may be Purged from Corrupt Humours. Stop, and prevent the first beginnings; for as he who makes Conscience to keep from secret faults and from secret sins, will much more from those which are more open and manifest. He that in the fear of the Lord abstains from little sins, he will much more abstain from those that are greater: So by the like Analogy and Reason of things, ( for the same or like Reason runs throughout all the things of God; He that is not Ignorant of the Devices of Satan, of whatsoever sort they be great or small; He that doth not give way unto them in the least, nor yet in any Instance whatever ( *Least Satan get an advantage over us* ) as he would

would if the least were consented unto ; In all Probability and Likelihood, yea, in absolute certainty and assurance, he will make a continuing and persevering work of it.

And may the Lord God ; who is a *Sun* and a *Shield* (in opposition to the darkness of the Enemy) give us *Grace and Glory*. (We may and ought to pray unto him in his own order, according as he hath promised) *No good thing will He withhold from him that walketh uprightly*. May he give us that further Knowledge of the Devices of Satan the Enemy, and that Grace and Strength, that we may not give way unto him in the least : *So we may be confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a Good Work in us, will perform it until the Day of Jesus Christ*. Amen.

*O Lord of Hosts, Blessed is the Man that trusteth in thee.*

F I N I S.

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Written by *RICHARD STAFFORD*,

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Tittle and Iota thereof, will be ful-  
filled.

Demonstrated in a Discourse on Rom. IX. 6.

By **RICHARD STAFFORD**, formerly  
of Magdalen-Hall in Oxford.

Isa. 55. 10, 11. For as the Rain cometh down, and the Snow  
from Heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the  
Earth, and maketh it to bring forth and bud, that it may  
give Seed to the Sower, and Bread to the Eater. So shall  
my Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth, it shall not  
return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I  
please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

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## R O M. IX. 6.

*Not as though the Word of God  
bath taken none effect.*

**O**N E of the Greatest Prejudices against the Preaching and Publishing of the Word of God is, in that so very few are converted by it, and do Obey it. Let Men Preach till their Heartsake (as the common Proverbial Speech is) and tire out their Lungs, spend their strength, yea, *Seek out acceptable Words*, as *Ecclesiastes* did, and do all that ever they can in the work of the Ministry, both by *studying in Gods Statutes* as *Dauids* Practice was, and also by Prayer and Diligent Labour; yet still the World will not be Reformed, nor brought off from their lees of Corruption and Iniquity. They will go on in their old former ways, Ungodliness and Wickedness, let the Ministers and Servants of God say and do whatever they can. Therefore it is, that the Word is called, *the Weakness of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 25. In that it is deemed to be unable and insufficient to effect the very thing it doth intend at, that is, to bring People over unto the obedience of the Law of God, and to Regulate their lives and manners.

The Commandment is Holy, Just and Good in it self; Thy Precepts concerning all things are Right, Yet here lies the great stumbling Block and Rock of offence, which quite keeps off the ungodly and mixt Multitude from

getting over it, and the steps of Good and Faithful People do well nigh slip thereat, In that, Notwithstanding it is so little obeyed, and so very little heed is given unto them by the Generality of People. They will indeed talk of the Commandments of God, and make a shew as if they had performed 1 Sam. 15. 13. And were guided thereby, but all along and in the mean while, *They do walk in a way that is not good after their own thoughts*, Isa. 65. 2. And according to their own Will, Humour, Inclination and Imaginations. It is a common saying, that People will have their Will whatever it cost them; And it is to be feared (as there is real Ground for this Surmise, from the Word of God) that too many are bent and resolved upon their own Will though they should be damned, or condemned for it at the Day of Judgment, and it cost them no less than *the Loss of their precious Immortal Souls*.

VVe read in the Old Testament, of *the Lord's Controversie with his people*; and this is the Controversie which he hath with the Inhabitants of the Earth, VWhether they shall do according to his VVord and Commandments, and be led by the silent and inward Dictates of his Spirit. Or they think, speak and practice, for the heart of every one of them is deep: *Our Lips are our own; VWho is Lord over us?* Thoughts are free, according to their own Supposal and Imagination. And so it is of the Words and Actions in the Children of Disobedience, They speak and do as they list. This is a Controversy which at the last will be decided to the Creatures Punishment and Misery.

The Psalmist doth speak further of the people of his Generation; *They corrupt others, and speak of Wicked Blasphemy; Their Talking is against the Most High*. There is indeed that Knowledge, and Outward Worship, and inward Reverential Esteem, Universally received amongst the people of this Nation, that hardly any, unless some very few Debauch'd, and Ignorant Young Men of the Richer sort, do talk directly and immediately against God himself; For this would be so odious and detestable, that even *the Common Multitude* would not bear it. But if they do not speak out, because that *they profess that*  
they

*they know God, but in Works they deny him.* But they think and Act to the very same purpose. God sees and knows the thoughts all one, as if they were wrote in Great Letters upon the Foreheads of those who did conceive them. And he doth make alike construction of their Actions, as if they did speak out the same what those Actions do Import.

Things are confused and seem perplex through the doings of Sinners and Hypocrites. By the former of which, I mean those who are open Barefaced and Manifestly Sinners; Who will own that they Commit Sin and Transgression, and make excuses for it; and cry out, *Lord have mercy upon us*, or the like. By Hypocrites, I intend such who observe all the Parts and seasons of the Worship of God, and other things pertaining to Religion; and yet they live in the Breach and Neglect of some of the Commandments of God. But whilst they seem to be Righteous and Religious when they are not; *And they justify themselves before Men*, whereas God knoweth the heart; *And what is highly esteemed amongst Men, is an Abomination in his sight*; Whilst they commend themselves and call themselves Godly and *Lean on the Lord*, Micah 3. 11. As Counterfeit Gold doth sometimes Shine and Glister more then true: So they Profess more Honour and Obedience to God then perhaps his very Elect and Real Servants, Hence our way is the more intricate to trace and find them out, then those who are downright Sinners and Ungodly. Whatever are the doings of all the Children of Men, the Word of God doth find them out; And however the Rebellious and Disobedient would render it ineffectual and useless, that is not binding and obligatory to them, and that it should be rather falsified then fulfilled, when it speaks of Mens obedience unto Righteousness; for as for their Part, they will not yield it. As we see and observe these things in the World, we are not thence to doubt in our own Mind; But in these and such like things, still we may have Recourse to this great Assertion of the Apostle, *Not as tho the Word of God hath taken none effect, for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.* That is. They are not all the

Servants of God, who have the Name and pretend to be so, or do herd themselves in their Number.

I did therefore choose and thought Good to insist upon these Words, chiefly, if not for the Removal (for it will still abide and remain) yet for the right understanding of that first Prejudice, which in the very beginning lies against the Word of God ; In that so very few are converted by it and do obey it ; That ye who do believe and obey to the saving of your Souls, be not soon *shaken in Mind*, by the Disadvantages which arise thereby ; for it may anon appear, that this is yet a greater fulfilling of the same Word.

As the Apostle *Paul* doth record of himself, *That after the manner of Men, he had fought with Beasts at Ephesus* : So both in the beginning, entrance and course of our Ministry (which is more advanced and carried on by Writing, Printing and Publishing then by speaking with a living Voice ; For whereas the Voice Perishes in the utterance and the matter is soon forgotten by the Hearer, that reaches to the People afar off and to after Ages) I say again, that both in the beginning and course of our Ministry, we have met with *Scoffers*, who with their several kinds of sayings, did endeavour either to turn us aside from our intended Ministry, or to defeat the design thereof. As it was said to *Ezekiel*, *Thou art not sent to a People of strange Speech and of an hard Language, but to the House of Israel. Not to many People of a strange Speech and of an hard Language, whose Words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened to thee. But the House of Israel will not bearken unto thee, for they will not bearken unto me. For all the House of Israel are impudent and hard hearted*, Ezek. 3. 5, 6, 7. So if I should recount my manifold Experiences, I should make known that I have met with more perverse and contrary usage, Evil entreaty, contradiction and false Reproaches from Formal and Nominal Christians, and from outward Worshippers, then ever I did from open Sinners and the manifest Ungodly : Tho' I have spoken equally against their Sin and Ungodliness, as

I



I have laid open the Hypocrisie and Foolish vain de-  
 ceits of the others. And yet all this doth nothing shake  
 me in Mind, nor yet doth it at all abate or lessen from  
 my present Comfort in the well grounded hope of  
 my future acceptance from the Lord. But rather it  
 doth increase and confirm me therein, *That I may*  
*have boldness in the Day of Judgment, because as he*  
*was, so are we in this present World.* For the like did  
 happen to him also, to be thus opposed and contradicted  
 in his Ministry by the Scribes and Pharisees ( who were  
 the then Teachers and Expounders of the Law ) and by  
 the *Jews*, who were as exact and constant in all the Parts  
 and Times of the outward worship of God all the same  
 while, as the People of this Nation do go continually to  
 their Parish Churches, or other Congregations and As-  
 semblies.

Where the most good is either done or intended, there  
 the Devil doth raise the greatest opposition ; and the old  
 Serpent doth never shew himself more subtle then when  
 he Acts through those who seem to be Religious and to  
 make a fair shew in the flesh. So that when the Spirit  
 of Lying and Falshood or Reproach doth proceed forth  
 through them, it hath a greater Appearance and Likeness  
 unto Truth ; and so it passes down glib with them, who  
 judge according to Appearance and not Righteous Judg-  
 ment.

*The Lord is well pleased for his Righteousness sake, He*  
*will magnifie the Law and make it Honourable, Isa. 42. 21.*  
 And as the Ministration thereof is more worthy and ex-  
 cellent then the Business and Employment of the Great-  
 est Kings or wisest States-Men. Nevertheless Ignorant  
 and Ungodly Minds, like as when *Michal* saw *David*  
 Dancing before the Ark, she despised him : So they will  
 lessen and have a low esteem of such a kind of Office. Or  
 as they Proudly and Disdainfully think, that it is not  
 consistent with a Good Birth and Education. Alas ! All  
 these and such like are but foolish and false Imaginations,  
 which Satan suggests and keeps in the Minds of some  
 People for to uphold his Kingdom. It is all but Imagi-  
 nation and nothing of reality therein, for as it is said in  
 the Book of *Job*, *I am also formed out of the Clay.* Ne-

*himself* the Governour of the Province speaks in the behalf of the Poor, Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our Brethren, our Children as their Children, Neh. 5. 5. God hath made of one Blood (observe that) all Nations of Men, for to dwell on the Face of the Earth, Acts 17. 26. Wherein then doth one differ from and excell another, even in respect of these vile Bodies, whilst we are in the midst of Life and carry them about us, all one as when they come to be in the place of Skulls, where the Poor and Rich are all alike. And whereas the Richer sort now a-days call themselves a good Family, I wish that sin and contempt of God, and that shame which is among them of coming down to the Plainness and Simplicity of his Worship, or to the place where his Word is Preached, did not manifest and demonstrate the contrary. *He that overcometh, shall not be hurt by the second Death.* And this is overcoming that Corruption which is both within our own Nature, and also that which is in the World through the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes and the Pride of Life. And truly, if the Pride of Life was overcome and rooted out of the minds of any one, as it is out of every one who is indeed the Child and Servant of God and an Heir of Glory; then all those things that savour of Men; All those Imaginations and Sayings which arise up from the Pride and Fashion of this World, or from the chief that is from the Rich People thereof, will all sink and fall to the ground, and be as dung in Comparison of the Knowledge of Jesus Christ, or what may further his Gospel in the World.

*For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ,* Rom. 1. 16. What need had the Apostle to say this? But only in Relation and Answer to those who would imagine and fasten shame thereon, in order to dissuade from what was Good and Praise worthy. The Devil Acts in the minds of People to endeavour to beat off, or let and hinder one who may be a proper Instrument and Labourer in the Work and Vineyard of the Lord. But the shame wherewith they would reproach that, shall at last return upon their own heads, when themselves shall at last rise up to Shame and Everlasting Contempt; And they who were ashamed of Christ in this Adulterous and Sinful

Generation (It is not said; *Jewish* or *Heathen*, but in *Epithets* proper and suitable to this Countrey of *England* at this Day.) of them shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the Glory of his Father with the Holy Angels.

People are commonly ashamed of that whereof a great stir and clutter is made before-hand and nothing comes of it. And hereupon it is, that Ignorant Persons and Unbelievers would endeavour to fasten shame on the Preaching of the Gospel. For as they think and object, the Gospel imports good tidings and talks of great, yea, the greatest things in the World, and nothing hereof is seen to them nor presently had. That Reason which *Paul* gives in *Rom. i. 16.* Seems to Answer all this to two sorts of People, the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth* (Observe and Attend well to that) *To the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* It is therefore said, *To be the Power of God unto Salvation, unto the Jew first.* This was to instruct and rightly inform him, who did expect Salvation by *Moses* and the Prophets; as to which they did both come short, which the Gospel of Christ doth supply and make up. The *Jews* were not so much Ignorant in Part, as Unbelievers in Part; But the *Greeks* or *Gentiles* were altogether Unbelievers in the whole. And take them as such, they can no more understand what this *Power of God unto Salvation* is, then if you talk the same unto a Brute Beast. And therefore it is fitly put before, *To every one that believeth.* For put the case, you should talk of *Salvation* to an Infant or to a Child of a twelvemonth old, Will He understand what thou sayest? In no wise. So it is, if you talk to a *Savage Indian*, who knows nothing of God or Futurity; and when such an one is in good Plight and Health and hath none but Friends about him, then talk to him concerning *Salvation*, which signifies Safety and Preservation from Danger, whereas he sees and perceives no danger at all. And He will think that the Man is Idle or Mocketh, or is Foolish, who talks and discourses thereof. It would be near the same to acquaint some Poor Ungodly Beggars about *Salvation*; If they are Healthy, Lusty and Strong,

Strong, if they have before them a Meal of Good Victuals and they know where to have another, they do not apprehend much more or besides this. But they think such an one speaks Parables, or Nonsensical things unto them.

It is very observable, how it is Ushered and brought in, *A Brutish Man knoweth not, neither doth a Fool understand this. When the Wicked Spring as the Grass, and when all the Workers of Iniquity do flourish, It is, that they shall be destroyed for Ever, Pſal. 92. 6, 7.* So it is, though it be besides their Opinion and Expectation. In like manner when any of the other Truths of God, or of the things pertaining to his Kingdom come to be declared and spoken of, the same Preface may be used and put before, *A Brutish Man knoweth not, neither doth a Fool understand this.* So it will be of the things whereof we shall by and by speak, *A Brutish Man knoweth not, neither doth a Fool understand this:* It being usual with the Holy Ghost, when He comes to make known things which will hardly meet with Credibility and Reception, to Anticipate and take notice of the same before-hand. As *Isaiah 53.* Begins after this manner, *Who hath believed our Report?* Importing that very few or none would, until afterward they should see it fulfilled.

It is properly and truly expressed when such are Termed *Brutish Men and Fools*; For tho' they have the shape of Men, yet they understand no more of the things of God; And thereby also we are given to apprehend (for 'tis the Wisdom and Knowledge of God which gives them this Character) that if they do not use that Image of God which he had Implanted in them, towards the Knowledge of God and of the things pertaining to his Kingdom; They lose it again, and Notwithstanding they retain the same outward shape with his Saints and Servants, yet in inward likeness they are very Brutes. And so whatever or how much they know besides if they have not this knowledge also, they are in very deed Fools, because hereby and for want thereof they become Subject and Liable unto Loss and Punishment.

Now



Now if I had altogether to do with Brutes and Fools, I should be ashamed of Preaching the Gospel, unless there were some Spiritual People who know of the things whereof we speak ; Or unless their understandings were somewhat opened that they could a little conceive thereof. But if the *Mystery of the Gospel* be a little opened and made known unto ye, then neither will ye object shame, nor yet shall I incur shame in the Preaching thereof. And in the mean while this is no running away or besides from the Text, but it shews and confirms all along that the *Word of God hath some effect and reality*. For whereas People are commonly ashamed of that, whereof a great clutter and stir is made and nothing comes of it. \* But the *Gospel is in Word*, and that is not so much as in things. *But yet the Gospel come not to you in Word only, but also in Power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance*, 2 Thes. 1. 5. It is much more then in other Words, for thus much is evident and sensible, that they have not so much Power over the Hearts and Consciences of Men as this Gospel hath. Neither were any other Words under Heaven, Accompanied with so many Signs and Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, whereby God himself did bear Witness to the certainty and reality of the things contained in this Everlasting Gospel. And then it is in much Assurance that it shall be all fulfilled and found true.

This is the very Reason why things so go on as they have and do now in the World, *That the Scriptures might be fulfilled* ; And therein the *Word of God hath its effect*, Which speaks of things exactly as they are. But here this is to be attended unto, that the Things and Words of God are to be performed and fulfilled *in their Season*, Luke 1. 20. That is according to the Order and Succession of Time, some have been already fulfilled, others are now at this Day fulfilling ; But the greatest and most things of all are yet to be fulfilled, as in the future State, the Resurrection of the Dead, the Day of Judgment and the Succeeding Eternity. The thing is certain, tho' the time appointed for it is long. *For the Vision is yet for an Appointed Time, but at the End it shall speak and not lie, tho' it Tarry, Wait for it ; Because it will surely Come,*

*Come, it will not Tarry, Hab. 2. 3. Gods work as to the Inhabitants of the Earth is a work of six or seven Thousand Years continuance, which is a going and carrying on ever since He first Created Man on the Earth, during all the while, He who hath called the Generations from the beginning, hath ordered them to pass through, all which is but a short time in respect to God, to whom a Thousand Years are but as one Day, tho' it be long to us. And accordingly the Scripture speaks of it thus differently both these manner of ways. That is, It is short as to God, and long as to us imperfect Creatures. For the Lord is not slack as concerning his Promise, as some Men count slackness for a Thousand Years, is as one day with the Lord, 2 Pet. 3. 8. For he will finish the Work and cut it short in Righteousness; Because a short Work will the Lord make upon the Earth, Rom. 9. 28. Yet as to us, the time appointed is long. Return, O Lord, How long? Psal. 90. 13. And shall not God avenge his own Elect, which cry Day and Night unto him, tho' he bear long with them, I tell you, that he will avenge them speedily, Luke 17. 7, 8. How long, O Lord, Holy and True, Dost thou not judge and avenge our Blood on them that dwell on the Earth? Rev. 6. 10. Tho' it was said sixteen hundred years ago that God would avenge them speedily, it is not done as yet; But tho' it be somewhat long as to our Expectation and Desire, yet it will be sure at last, and it will be all done together, as may be understood from the following Verse here, And white Robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little Season, until their fellow Servants also and their Brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. And so the Destruction of Sinners and Transgressors shall be together, Isa. 1. 28. Even of all Generations and Countreys. So that such being the Decree and Order of God, ye are in no wise to think. Not as tho' the Word of God hath taken none effect, For it will be all found true in its Season. Not one jot of the Law shall pass away, until all be fulfilled. And not one of the sayings therein as to future things, shall fall to the Ground till it shall indeed so come to pass. Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but my Words shall not*

not pass away. *The Grass withereth, the Flower fadeth, but the Word of our God shall stand for Ever, Isa. 40. 8.*

Hereby also it may be understood, that Unbelievers and the Ignorant Multitude are certainly deceived in their Imaginations. For whereas they Judge very much by Events; And because they see no such dreadful Judgments poured down upon Sinners, *That all things happen alike to all, and continue as they were from the beginning of the Creation: Men and Women fall asleep, and dye as People usually do, they think falsely, They may therefore do as they will; It is the Preachers Trade to cry out against sin, but they are vain Words for they come to nothing. Whereas we speak of future Rewards and Punishments, and the Time of Decision is not yet come. Son of Man, What is that Proverb that ye have in the Land of Israel? Saying, The Days are Prolonged, and every Vision faileth, Tell them therefore, thus saith the Lord God, I will make this Proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a Proverb in Israel; but say unto them, the Days are at hand and the effect of every Vision, Ezek. 12. 22, 23. This Answers to the very Words of my Text; For it shews that the Word of God hath some, and will have yet a greater Effect. As the same is again Affirmed, But the Word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord God, Ezek. 12. 28. And tho' the Vision which we see (With the Eyes of our Understanding being enlightened) is yet for many Days to come, and the Prophecy of the Times that are afar off, yet they will be present and near also. And it is therefore thus ordered by the Wisdom of God, to prove the Children of Men these forty, fifty, or sixty Years, To know what is in their Heart, whether they will keep his Commandments or no, Deu. 8. 2. And He said I will hide my Face from them, I will see what their End shall be; for they are a very forward Generation. Children in whom there is no faith, Deu. 32. 20. According to the Revelation of the Mystery (Mark that) which was kept secret since the World began. But now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the Commandment of the Everlasting God, made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith, Rom. 16. 25, 26. Here is the Mystery*

Mystery of God Revealed and Manifested ( which same Mystery of God at length will be finished as He hath declared to his Servants the Prophets, *Rev. 10. 7.*) For things were purposely so ordained to prove all Nations, whither they would yield an Obedience of Faith. That they might *walk by Faith and not by Sight.* And herein the other Scriptures agree and have Relation, *He that believeth, shall not make haste,* *Ila. 28. 16.* Which being twice Quoted by *Paul*, in *Rom. 9. 33. Rom. 10. 11.* The latter Words instead of, *shall not make haste, is, shall not be ashamed.* Both put together make up near the same Sence and Meaning, and exactly Pertinent to the matter in hand. That is as much as to say, *That whosoever doth know and really believe the things of God in the very order as they stand and are Determined, He shall not make haste;* As to think, or go about to get them fulfilled sooner then their appointed Time. And whoso is fully perswaded of and doth embrace them by Faith, He is not ashamed in this World for following after invisable and future things; but more especially, He shall not be ashamed (it is spoken in the future tence) in the World to come, for they shall be Actually given and made Good to the Soul that seeketh them.

By Faith we apprehend and lay hold on these Encouraging Promises, *And they that be Wise* (In the Margent it is, Teachers) *shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament;* *And they that turn many to Righteousness, as Stars for Ever and Ever,* *Dan. 12. 3.* Brethren, if any of you do err from the Truth and one Convert Him. Let him know that He which Converteth a sinner from the Errour of his way, shall save a Soul from Death, and shall hide a Multitude of Sins, *James 5. 19.* Here it hath been Scoffingly and Sarcastically objected unto us, What, you Convert Sinners? They will not be Converted by thee, Go and Convert those at your own House. But *Jesus* said unto them, *A Prophet is not without Honour, but in his own Countrey and among his own Kin, and in his own House,* *Mark 6. 4.* And He commonly doth the least good amongst them. Like as the light of a Candle on a Candlestick, gives light to those further off, but casts a dark shadow next round about it self. Moreover, ye are to know,



know, *Not as tho' by our own Power or Holiness, we can make this Lame Man to walk*, Much less to run in the way of Gods Commandments. Nor yet by our own Knowledge or Wisdom can we bring any one back into the right way who was gone astray. We do utterly Disclaim and Renounce whatsoever is of self, or our own. But yet when He that *Out of the Mouth of Babes and Sucklings hath ordained strength*, Psal. 8. 2. *He that maketh the Dumb*, Exod. 4. 11. And the *Stammering Lips*, Isa. 28. 11. to serve for his own Glory, doth appoint such a weak Vessel and Unworthy Instrument, for the Ministration of his Word and Truth; Although the Person himself cannot effect any thing, yet the Word and Truth of God which appears forth through him, *will have its effect*, one way or another, either to Salvation or Condemnation, either to make People partakers of the Mercy of God, or to Load them with more Guilt and Ill deserving, if they will not obey the Word of Life. And tho' this last seems to be an hard saying, yet it is grounded on those Words of the great Preacher of Righteousness, *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no Cloke for their sin*, John 15. 22. And so the Apostle Paul Witnesseth in behalf of himself and of the other Ministers of the Gospel, *For we are unto God a sweet Savour of Christ in them that are Saved, and in them that Perish. To the one, are we the Savour of Death unto Death, and to the other the Savour of Life unto Life, and VVho is sufficient for these things*, 2 Cor. 2. 15, 16. As himself doth Answer this last in the fifth Verse of the following Chapter, *Not that we are sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God*. And if we are not sufficient to think, neither are we sufficient to speak or to do: We are meer Creatures in the hands of God. As in him we live and move and have our Being. So whatever Good Words and True Words do proceed forth from any one, It is what before he had put into our Heart. It is agreeable unto his method and manner of Dispensation, to Publish and make known his word and will unto the Inhabitants of the Earth; By Men of the like Passions and of the same Flesh and Blood with our selves. And  
 it

it hath so came to pass, that who have been the greatest Instruments of his Glory, and have received most from God of any in their several Generations; The World hath not known them, but despised them. Which hath happened not only as to the Ungodly and common sort. But even so it hath been with the Multitude of outward Worshippers, and who called themselves the Servants of God. The truth of this observation appears from the History of the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles, and of his Faithful Ministers ever since, who have been *Workmen approved of God, and not Men pleasers*. That is to say, such who have Fashioned the Word of God according to the Will and Lust of the Rich and Mighty People. Which if they had been indeed the Servants of Christ, they would not have so Learned of him their Master.

*For as the Rain cometh down and the Snow from Heaven, and returneth not thither, but Watereth the Earth, and maketh it to bring forth and bud; that it may give Seed to the Sower and Bread to the Eater, so shall my Word be that goeth out of my Mouth: It shall not return unto me Void; but it shall Accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it, Isa. 55. 10, 11.* It shall Accomplish either the Salvation or Condemnation of People; It shall thus Prosper in the thing whereto God sends and intends it. That if it doth not reform them, it will leave them more without excuse. The same Word, which now warns them of both, will pass upon their several and respective Lives and Deaths for all Eternity. Tho' when the Word of God is laid before People and they obey it not, nor do accordingly, then it is thought to be vain, weak and ineffectual; Yet God Himself here saith, *It shall not return to him Void; But whither they will hear, or whither they will forbear, it shall be known that there hath been a Prophet among them, Ezek. 2.* Such Words have been made known, or such things have been Written; That they might have turned from their Iniquities, and from the Evil of their doings, which however they were Stified or Dilregarded in the mean while, shall rise up again at the Judgment of the Great Day. They were warned and testified against, and his

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Laws were set before them ; but when they would not take warning, nor yet yield unto him, who by his Word, Spirit and Ministers testified against them to bring them again to his Law ; All these and such like are Signs and Prognosticks that such People will Perish. It here comes to pass, *As when Paul expounded and testified the Kingdom of God, some believed the things which were spoken and some believed not, Acts 18. 23, 24.* So it is of Preaching every Sermon out of the Word of God, or bearing forth every Testimony of Divine Truth, some obey and give heed unto it, and some do not. Then Zerubbabel the Son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the Son of Josedech the High Priest, with all the Remnant of the People obeyed the Voice of the Lord their God, and the Words of Haggai the Prophet (as the Lord had sent him) and the People did fear before the Lord, Hag. 1. 12. And so we read in Ezra. 10. They did obey the Commandment of the Lord, in putting away the strange Wives. But we Read more often in the Book of Kings, Chronicles, Isaiah, Jeremiah and in the Evangelists ; That the Chief and Multitude of the People did not obey, then that they did obey. And yet it was the Word of God which was Preached unto them also. But it so came to pass, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled which speak of their Destruction. When the Prophet came to Ananias with Words from the Lord, and met with a rough Answer from Ananias. He said, *I know that the Lord hath Determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my Counsel, 2 Chron. 25. 16.* And so it was remarkably Noted of those that came out against the Children of Israel to Battel, *For it was of the Lord to harden their Hearts, that they should come against Israel in Battel, that He might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour ; but that He might destroy them as the Lord Commanded Moses, Josh. 11. 20.* And so it was Emphatically remarked after that gentle Reproof of Eli unto his Sons, *Notwithstanding, they hearkened not unto the Voice of their Father, because the Lord would slay them, 1 Sam. 2. 25.* It is just the same, after all the Preaching and Good Admonition and Counsel, warning after warning, *Line upon Line, Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept, Precept upon Precept, here a little and there a little.* Notwithstanding all the things which are contained in the standing writ-

ten Word of God in the Bible ; Notwithstanding all that is Preached and Alledged out from thence every Sabbath and Week Day, throughout the several Congregations and Places of this *Island* ; Notwithstanding all the Reproof and Admonition of Christian Friends and Acquaintance. And what is yet more and nearer and closer unto them, Notwithstanding all the Accusings and Distates of their own Conscience (which is Gods Witness in Man or Woman) yet still, There are a People in the World who will not hearken unto the Voice of all these. Tho' it must be carefully said as to Temporal Judgments, that they therefore Refuse and Disobey, because the Lord would slay them. But as to futurity, *The Lord is not willing that any should Perish, but that all should come to Repentance*, 2 Pet. 3. 9. However, He affording them the means thereof after continued and repeated Provocation, as to that he gives them up at length to themselves, to their own Hearts Lusts and to walk after their own Counsels, in which they going on will Perish Everlastingly. God hath suffered it so to be, *That Satan works with all Deceivableness in them that Perish*, which comes upon them through his continued Temptations and Suggestions.

I have oftentimes thought that People would never do so of themselves, as now they do in Offending, Displeasing, Despising and Provoking of God, but that an unseen Enemy doth stir them up. Like as it is recorded, *But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work Wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jeshabel his Wife did stir up*, 1 Kings 21. 25. In the Margent it is incited. So tho' there is a great deal of Wickedness in the Heart of Man, by Reason of original and inbred Corruption (for Flesh and Blood will Imagine and Practise Evil) Yet this Corrupt Nature would never proceed and tend so far (especially in immediate Rebellion against, and Provocation or Despising of God ; for what is shewed forth against his Word, is against God himself, as it will be found by his Interpretation and Judgment at the last, tho' perhaps this may be now besides, and out of the Mind and Intention of the Creatures) unless this Infernal *Jeshabel*, whose Right Name is *Belzebub* did stir and incite them up. *Now the Serpent was more subtle then any Beast of the Field, which the Lord God had made*.



*made*, Gen. 3. 1: He is more cunning then all, or any of the Sons or Daughters of Men ( as they are merely such without the assistance and direction of Gods Word and Spirit ) He tempts, suggests and doth whatever He can, that each one in particular may lose Heaven, and fall into Hell, He walketh about seeking whom He may devour. It is his continued Business and Employment.

So that it is not altogether so much to be wondered at, tho' indeed it is a matter of *Horror and Grief*, Psal. 119. 53, 158. and *Sighing*, Ezek. 9. 4. That when God hath made such very severe Declarations from Heaven against all manner of Sin and Transgression, and against all *Un-godliness and Unrighteousness of Men*. Which also will be Executed upon and sensibly felt by them after that their Breath is out of their Nostrils, and their Souls are departed from their Bodies ; Yet Nevertheless in this Time of Provocation and in this Day of Temptation or Trial in this Wilderness of the Earth, still People go on therein and do the same. Yea, rather more Greedily and Earnestly then they would have done, if God had revealed no wrath and future Punishment against the same. I knew a Man, who after he had been convinced of the Sin of Unrighteousness, and after He had heard the Word of God declared against it ; Yet the next opportunity afterwards, He would more eagerly Practice the same. And so when the like hath been done to Harlots and Unclean Persons, the Sin and Danger of their course hath been laid open and made known unto them by my Ministry of the Word, it hath been told unto me, that at the very same moment, they would for all Practice the lesser Acts of Lasciviousness : This sheweth after what manner the Spirit of Disobedience doth work in the Children thereof ; And when they will of set Purpose Transgress yet more and more, in plain and downright opposition to the Word of God, and to the Preaching and Ministration thereof. *When they will run greedily after the Error of Balaam for Reward*, Jude 11. Or to the Error of any of their own ways, any Law or Ordinance of God to the contrary Notwithstanding ; *When they will break these Bands asunder, and cast away these Cords from them* ; And they will do it the rather, because the Lord by his Word, and Ministers hath forbidden it. This and such like in the very Truth, seems to be that Sin of Presumption, or

that *Sinning with an high hand*, whereof it is written, *The Soul which doth Presumptuously, shall be cut off from my People saith the Lord.* Ay, But the People of the World do not value nor fear that Threatning, for such Persons who do Presumptuously and Sin with an high hand do commonly live out their appointed Time in Health, Strength, Wealth and Prosperity, as other People do. Yet Alas! In this they are Ignorant or Unmindful, that God hath another Place besides this Earth, and another time besides this Life, wherein He will fulfil and make true his Word, *For tho' a Sinner doth Evil an Hundred Times and his Days be Prolonged, yet it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him,* Eccl. 8. 12. *But the sinner being an Hundred Years Old, shall be Accursed,* Isa. 65. 20. By which Phrase of Accursed, we are given to understand that the Word of God doth speak Evil of him now (for so *Maledictio* the Latin Word for a Curse, doth signify) and it shall go Evil with him at the last. *When all the Curses that are written in this Book shall be upon him,* Deu. 29. 20. And shall be also Executed, and the Lord also shall *Blot out his Name from under Heaven, so that Himself shall not go there.* This is to be cut off from Gods People, when they shall be *Blotted out of the Book of the Living, and not written with the Righteous,* Psal. 69. 28. So that tho' when He heard the Words of the former Threatning, He blessed himself in his Heart, saying, *I may live as long as other Men and Women, tho' I walk in the Imagination of my Heart, to add sin to my Lawful desires.* For that is, *Adding Drunkenness to Thirst.* Inasmuch as Thirst is a Lawful and Necessary desire, whereas Drunkenness is a Sin. So the Course of the World goes on, that whereas such and such Thoughts, Words and Actions are Lawful and Necessary, People go on to graft and add thereto Vain Thoughts, False Words, and Sinful Actions of their own, whereof there is no need. For as Thirst may altogether as well, or rather be better quenched and satisfied without Annexing Drunkenness to it. So People might think, speak and Act altogether as well, yea better, then by conceiving Vanity, speaking forth Falsehood, or Acting of Evil. It is yet seven times a greater Sin, and will make the Oven or Furnace seven Times yet hotter, which shall be for their Punishment when they Tag or Link on an Oath, or Speech of Vain

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Swearing to an Expression, when the Sentence which they speak would be more perfect and entire without it ; Or if to their Actions and Doings, they Annex Iniquity and Transgression. Nevertheless so it hath been, so it is, and so it will be, during the Time of this Generation. Altho' at length there will be an End of Transgression, *And the Wicked shall be no more*, Psal. 104. 35. For in what Prayer the Spirit of Truth doth dictate, is included a Promise that so it shall be. Yet until these latter Days and that Time is come, the World will go on in Sinning, let what will be spoken or declared against it.

Herein the *Word of God hath its Effect* ; For hereby it is confirmed, I had almost said, seen, but I am sure it is perceived, that there is a Devil, *Who deceiveth the Nations, and deceiveth the whole World*, Rev. 12. 9. *For these be the Days of Vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled*, Luke 21. 22. So it is as to the foregoing Sin and Transgression, which bring these Judgments on the Earth ; It must needs go on in its course, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, which say, in *Mat. 7. 13.* and *Mat. 25.* That some, yea, and the greater part of Mankind shall go away into Everlasting Punishment. But as our Lord said concerning offences, *It must needs be that offences come. But Wo unto that Man by whom the offence cometh*, Mat. 18. 7. So in like manner it may be here applyed, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled ; It must needs be that the greater Part of Mankind shall go away into Everlasting Punishment. But Wo unto those Particular Souls, who shall have their Lot and Portion in this matter ; For they can no more cease to be miserable, then they can cease to be. This is as certain, tho' as yet it is not altogether so evident and visible, then that there is a World which we behold, or an Earth which we tread on : For saith the same Word, by the which the Heavens and the Earth were Created, and the same Truth by the which they are now upheld, and the things therein are Connected together, *Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but my Words shall not pass away.*

Tho' it is imagined and said, that seeing is believing. It is an improper Expression, *For faith is the evidence of things not seen* ; And that which a Man seeth, He doth not so much believe as know, yet for my Part, when I think of *Heaven*, or Read the 25th Chapter of *Matthew*, *How that*

*all Nations shall be Gathered, and Christ shall separate them one from another, as a Shepherd divideth his sheep from the Goats, and he shall set the Sheep on the Right hand and the Goats on the left, and shall say to the one, Come ye Blessed, &c. And to the other, Go ye Cursed, I say, All this is as evident and manifest to me, as it I did now see that Great and Terrible sight with my outward Bodily Eyes. And truly, if we did see that vast and doleful herd of Condemned Criminals, as they are going to the Place of Everlasting Punishment, we should fear. For it is a thing Infinitely more to be Pitied, then now a little Commiseration doth arise, as we behold Sheep or Cattle going to the Shambles and Slaughter House. What God hath said by his Son Jesus Christ, shall certainly come to pass: So that this will as certainly be as if we now saw it with our Eyes. For it will as certainly be in the appointed Time, as that we now present, were once living on the Earth. What can be more forcible to make us take the utmost heed that our selves be not among them?*

It would be an hard Case, if there was not one in such a Parish or Neighbourhood, who should go to Heaven. But I trust that several will, as I am assured from the Scriptures of Truth, *That all those will who have a Good Conscience, and are willing to live honestly in all things, Heb. 13. 18.* So it would be Melancholly and Dismal to suppose. But yet it is justly and truly to be feared, that some in this Neighbourhood, I do not know one of them, but the Lord knows who the very Persons be that are in such a place now; Who shall be found amongst those *Goats*, at the very last Day. But either to convince them thereof, or to make it known unto them, would make their Life hang in doubt, and fill them with a *fearful Expectation*, and give them a trembling heart: So to point them out by their Names and Distinct Persons, it would make all Christians, *Note that Man or Woman*, and have no *Conversation with them*, If he or she should prove certainly a cast away, or a Condemned Creature at that Day. But every one would be afraid or shy of them in the mean while (as now they are of a Man that is to be hanged or put to Death) I do here somewhat allude to those Words of the Apostle, *If any Man obey not the Word of this Epistle, Note that Man, and have no Conversation with him that he be ashamed.* So if  
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any Man or Woman amongst ye do not obey those things, which have been here alledged unto ye from the Word of the Lord; If there be any who will despise and go *from arily in the way of their heart.* And further, if there be any who shall do Presumptuously and Sin with an high hand, as of set Purpose, to Sin and Transgress more and more, because such things have been spoken against that, and all manner of Sin and Transgression; Truly, my Brethren, Partakers of the same Flesh and Blood, these and such like are sad Signs and Prognosticks, that such very Persons will be indeed found among that Number of Goats at the last Day, and to them I am now sent with heavy Tidings, *It would be good for them if they had never been Born;* And upon them this Word Preached and Published will have its effect (like the Sun which doth melt Wax, but harden Clay) for Evil, but not for Good. And here People should not so much as keep Company with such, so as to Encourage them in their Evil Deeds, or so much as barely to Countenance them in their Rebellion, Transgression, or even in their Contempt of the Lord God; But only to warn, exhort and testify, that they seeing themselves as it were cut off from the Society of Mankind, by perceiving the Inconvenience and Misery thereof, may understand the ten Thousand Times greater Misery to be cut off and deprived from the *General Assembly and Church of the first Born which are Written in Heaven; And from God the Judge of all, and the Spirits of just Men made Perfect.* And this would be some means for them to turn out of the wrong way which leads unto Destruction; *And they maybe ashamed of Transgressing without a cause,* Psal. 25. 3. Or, that they should ever despise the Lord their God.

It was aforesaid, that the foregoing Sin and Transgression which bring these Judgments on the Earth must needs go on in its Course that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. What are these Judgments? They are declared in *Math. 24.* and *Luke 21.* *Rumors, stirs and commotions of Wars, Nation against Nation, and Great Earthquakes shall be in Divers Places,* Luke 21. 11. And there was a Great Earthquake in *Jamaica,* in *June or July, 1692.* There was an Universal shaking of the Earth throughout most Parts of *Europe* in *September, 1692.* And in *January, 1692.* There was the Greatest Earthquake in the *Islands of Sicily, and Malta,* so as to swallow up an Hundred and

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Sixscore Thousand Inhabitants, then ever I heard or read of in History since Man was Created on the Earth. These are *Great Earthquakes in Divers Places, and Fearful Sights, and Great Signs there have been from Heaven*; As the Great Comet about eighteen Years ago, which is no long Time according to the Course and Reckoning of Time in the Decree of God, and according to Scripture Account. And for ought we know, that gentle Universal shaking of the Earth in *England, France, Holland, or the Low Countreys*; Wherein it is more observable, and shews that the Hand of God is somewhat more in it, then the ordinary Course of Nature: Because it happened thus at the very same Minute of Time in other Places, which were distinct and separated one from another by the Great and Wide Sea; All this may be a forerunner of a much Greater Earthquake, from which we are no more secured and absolutely preserved by the Advantage of our Countreys Scituation, and because such things have not been so usually among us as among others, *For the Pillars of the Earth are the Lords, and he hath set the World upon them. For He who stretcheth the North over the empty Place, and hangerh the Earth upon nothing, Can find out this way to Punish us if he please.* As it is yet more certain, that tho' if the Earth should not swallow us up alive, yet it is but a very little while, and it will receive and devour our Dead Bodies, as also it gives Assurance of what he hath promised, which hath been in some measure already, and is yet to be fulfilled, *Saying, Yet once more I shake not the Earth, but also Heaven,* Hag. 2. 6. Heb. 12. 26. Which is not only set forth by way of Greatness of Expression, or to signify only the Men and Women contained therein; but it shall reach and affect even the very Elemental Bodies, even the whole Creation according to 2 *Pet.* 3. As our selves shall one Day see; All one as we now hear, that those foregoing signs are fulfilled. And as at such a Season of the Year, we behold all the Trees shoot forth and the Grass doth grow, then we know of our selves that Summer is near at hand; *So likewise when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand.* Now it is nearer then ever it was yet. But we are given to understand farther, that by the more then ordinary appearance of these foregoing signs, we are just entring upon, if not falling into those Great and Glorious Times. Whereof



Whereof the Scriptures do abundantly speak that it shall be in the latter Days, that the Great Things of God shall be fulfilled. And tho' Christ said Sixteen Hundred Years ago, *This Generation shall not pass away till all these things shall be fulfilled* ( By which kind of Expression faith is exercised and proved, as also the understandings of Men are somewhat Puzzled ) yet take and include Christ himself into that Generation ( for he was then in the Days of his Flesh, and a Generation includes all that are living therein ) and it holds literally true in that sence, for He the Son of God hath not passed away, *But was without beginning of Days or End of Life, but abiderth continually*. But I do verily believe, That tho' there is never a Christ now on Earth, nor an *Enoch*, nor yet any such of whom there is a saying, *That any now living shall not die* ; Yet before all the Young Men and Children, and Infants, that are now Breathing on this Earth are gone off from it, there will be yet somewhat a Greater and more extraordinary Manifestation concerning the Kingdom of God, then hath been in all the mean Generations, since Christ and his Apostles were on the Earth. And this I do assuredly gather, because the Time of the *Promise draws nigh*, Acts 7. 17. As is Manifest from the yet greater Appearance and Conspicuousness of those foregoing signs here mentioned.

All this put together should induce us to lay these things to heart, and to tremble and fear continually before the Lord God of Heaven and Earth, for what he hath already done on the Earth, as also out of Expectation of what he will do yet further. Which Expectation our hearts should be always very full off, and in no wise Choke and Stifle the sence thereof with *Gluttony, Drunkenness, and the Cares of this Life, and so that Day come upon you unawares*, Luke 21. 34. Which is brought in upon this occasion. As *Moses* said upon that terrible sight at Mount *Sinai*, *I exceedingly fear and quake*: So the same mind should be at all Times and in all Places, in all the Servants of God, as to what they have heard or seen, He hath done more lately, is now a doing, and will shortly bring yet greater things to pass, then all these in this Earth, the lower Part of the World.

As God at first made all things, and doth now uphold them by the Word of his Power : So some of them do move and go on according to his Will, Appointment and Decree

**Decree.** Known to God are all his Works from the beginning of the World, and so it is as to what He will do towards the End thereof, as our selves know what we intend to do at such a Time hereafter, if we have the same Mind and Will, Strength and Opportunity, Life and Power of Action, or such like. The want of any of which do often cause a neglect or failure of the same. But now with God, there is no variableness nor shadow of turning, He is Almighty and Eternal. What He once Decrees, Purposes or Wills, he doth certainly bring to pass; and he speaks of things before they are done, *While they are yet Springing up do I tell you of them.* And so it is, when he speaks of things before-hand, and they do afterwards come to pass in like manner, then it is, that his word is fulfilled. There are a Thousand Instances of this in Scripture, and so very many, for the whole is but an orderly Declaration of such things, that it is superfluous to mention Particulars.

Those who know somewhat more of God, then the ordinary and common Multitude, do apprehend, perceive and observe, that as all things are Gods, from the *Cedar in Lebanon* to the *Hyssop* on the Wall, from the greatest to the smallest; for his Providence and Government of things is comprehensive of and extensive, even unto sparrows and the hairs of our head, the more inconsiderable Creatures, and every least thing that belongs to us; All one as to Angels or Men, or to the yet greater Works of the Creation. So as that same Word in Scripture doth speak of all things that are done on this Earth: So Reciprocally whatever is done or comes to pass or happens here, it is all a fulfilling of the same Word. There is hardly any thing whatever, be it of greater or less moment, but some Places in the Book of the Lord do speak thereof either in express Words, or near to the same purpose. *There shall the great Owl make her Nest, and lay and hatch, and gather under her shadow: There shall the Vultures also be gathered every one with her Mate. Seek ye out of the Book of the Lord and Read, No one of these shall fail, no one shall want her Mate; for my mouth it hath Commanded, and his Spirit it hath gathered them,* Isa. 34. 15, 16. As the Apostle saith, *Doth God take care for Oxen?* So doth his Word speak of *Cormorants*, and *Bitterns* and *Ravens*, *Wild Beasts* and *Satyrs*, *Schreech Owls* and *Great Owls*, and *Vultures* and *Thorns*, and *Nettles* and *Brambles?* Yes, verily it doth, and

of all the things in the Earth, and even of the very Times and Seasons of the Year, *How Grass doth grow upon the Mountains and Herb for the use of Man.* Observe this last, which leads again towards our Subject and Intended matter. For as the same Apostle *Paul* goes on to add, *Saith He it altogether for our sakes ? For our sakes, no doubt this is Written,* 1 Cor. 9. 10. So as there is a certain Connexion and Linking on together of all the Creatures and Works of God (whither Living or Inanimate) So they have each severally, and all together a yet greater Connexion, Tendency and Relation to us Men and Women. It is so Written of them, and so Gods speaks of them in his word, for our sakes, in order to us, as they are somewhat concerned, and do belong unto the Exercise and Administration of his Kingdom and Dominion over Men: He being the God unto whom we and all the other Creatures besides, have to do. It is but a small matter as to these outward visible present things, *But the Kingdom of God is within you*; And the chief and only matter is as each stands in Subordination, Subserviency and Tendency to the invisible and future State of things; and that is Branched out only one of these two ways, Salvation or Condemnation, Happiness or Misery.

The Word of God hath its effect, upon all Men and Women of every Countrey, Nation and Language, from the beginning of their Generations unto the End thereof, one of these two ways, *Go ye into all the World and Preach the Gospel to every Creature. He that believeth and is Baptized, shall be saved; and He that believeth not, shall be Damned,* Mark 16. 15, 16. He that obeyeth all the whole Word of God shall be saved; but He that obeyeth not the Word of God shall be Damned. *He that observes all things whatsoever Christ hath Commanded, Christ will be a Saviour unto him;* But He that doth not observe all things whatsoever Christ hath Commanded, He is without the Covenant and Benefit of a Saviour; and He shall Perish. *For the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall be Punished with Everlasting Destruction, from the Presence of the Lord and the Glory of his Power.*

It is Reported of *Chrysostome*, who was in his Generation a Preacher unto a very Numerous Auditory in the City of *Antioch.* (Where the Disciples were first called *Christians*, And I would to God, they had never been called any thing else since) that He should say, that if He was to Preach before all the Men and Women living upon the Earth, and such a thing were possible for them all to be gathered together, and his Voice could reach them all (as such

such a thing might be now effected by Printing and an Universal Publication of the several Copies, which would be a very good work if it were so done. He would choose for his Text these Words, *O ye Sons of Men, How long will ye turn my Glory into shame? How long will ye Love Vanity and seek after leasing? Selah, Plal. 4. 2.* So if the like was here to be supposed, as indeed it might be of good effect if it were so done, there could not be a more proper Subject chosen then what hath been here insisted on, To shew, *How short the Word of God will have its effect, upon those Multitudes, Multitudes in the Valley of Decision, Joel 3. 14.* So as to decide their future State and Condition one way or another. As the Proverb is among the *Lavins*, *Ye may guess at the Bigness of Hercules by his Foot*: So we may make some estimate of this Generation of Men and Women now living upon the Earth, by such a mixt Multitude Assembled together of Saints and Sinners. As there are probably of both sorts, so it is abroad in all Parishes of this Nation, and also in all the other Habitable Parts of the Earth. *Some will believe the things that have been spoken, and some will believe them not.* Some will obey these Words, and some will obey them not. And Perhaps, of this latter sort, some will be found, who will sin yet more Violently and Earnestly, and Greedily, because such Words of Soberness and Truth, have been declared unto them. They will make (if they can) the Preacher a Liar; and what lies in them, the Word of God of none effect. As if it was not able and sufficient to Convert Sinners from the Error of their ways, in that themselves are resolved not to be Converted by it. There be those abroad in the World, who do not Hear or Read this; and if they do not altogether so perversely and obstinately against the Word Preached, for they hear little or none at all; and it may be out of a secret Consciousness, that their own Lives are not Answerable thereunto, nor yet will they Regulate their Life and Manners according to it; and they imagine that then to Hear or Read the Word of God, will but so much the more increase their Sin and Guilt. These do not consider, how that the Weight and Abomination of Iniquity is set forth throughout the Old Testament: *In refusing to Hear Gods Words, The Spirit it self calleth them, This Evil People which refuse to hear my Words, Jer. 13. 10.* (Which I would, were more attended unto even by the very Worshipers of God) that when an opportunity is given, or Door is open to hear the Word Preached, they count it a matter indifferent, they may hear or let it alone. But let such know, *That when the Dead small and great, shall stand before God,* They shall remember, and find that it was matter of Duty for them to have heard, and not as a thing of Indifferency, which carries along with it a Contempt and Neglect of the things pertaining to his Kingdom. It will be then seen which way doth most please and shall find Acceptance with God, as also whither the



Presumptuous sinner doth not yet more displease and provoke him by those his Imaginations. But even in those who are most ignorant and keep away from the sight and hearing of his Word; Nevertheless, God hath not left himself without Witness, for they have a certain Rumour and Notion, or rather an apprehension of the things contained in the Bible. They have many silent and serious thoughts within themselves; and when these do reprove, warn and Testify, they do in like manner Presumptuously against them, as others do immediately against the word Preached. But where is that degree of the Spirit of Contradiction, and that utmost Height of Disobedience, To do after their own Lust and Will, any Law or Ordinance of God to the contrary Notwithstanding. For the Language of Stubbornness speaks on this wise, *I have Loved Strangers, and after them I will go.* This makes their sin to be exceeding sinful in the mean while, and such shall be beaten with more stripes, and Inherit a greater Condemnation at the last.

The Prophet doth intend somewhat alike to what it afore mentioned, when he useth that Phrase and kind of words. *Hearken unto mee ye Stouthearted that are far from Righteousness.* Isa. 46. 12. *Stouthearted*, such as will not submit as it were out of a Piece of Pride and Bravery, and they do of set purpose keep off. *I bring near my Righteousness, it shall not be far off and my Salvation shall not tarry.* Vers. 13. But they will go further off and stand more at a distance and delay yet more that they may not see it. A perverse and contrary manner of Acting, which God doth behold and will recompense upon them.

There are some who let God do what He will, send forth his Light and make further Manifestations of his Truth, give more Pressing Motives and Arguments, send his several sorts of Judgments, yet they will not return unto the Lord. And so Notwithstanding all his methods of Mercy and Truth, when there are Great Multitudes already brought over and Converted, yet they reckon it as it were a greater Piece of Gallantry and Honour, that for all this they will not be perswaded. *Who in the Land of Uprightness will deal Unjustly, and will not behold the Majesty of the Lord,* Isa. 26. 10. In that exceeding Glory of the Church, by the vast Multitude of the Gentiles coming in, yet still some will be Rebellious, yea, and refuse to come. And therefore is that Denunciation and Threatning put as it were just in the middle of all those Blessings and Promises, *For the Nation and Kingdom that will not serve thee shall Perish; Yea, those Nations shall be utterly wasted,* Isa. 60. 12. It that be their Humour and Resolution, so it may be to kick against the Pricks, to run their Head violently against a Brass Wall, to set themselves as it were against their God. When He hath Prophesied and Foretold of such an Universal Reformation, they will what lieth in them, make God a Liar, for themselves will still refuse to be reformed. O Wicked Fools! Poor Ignorant

**I**gnorant Souls! This ye cannot do, but confirm his Word the more, for his Holy Spirit doth foresee this Stubbornness and Rebelliousness of Yours, and speaks of it some Thousand Years before your selves Practice it, *That the Purpose of God might stand, And what Himself hath said shall be fulfilled.* Nevertheless, for your Evil Intent and Malice of Heart, you shall smart and be Punished for the same. *They shall Perish and be utterly wasted;* And then themselves shall know whither it would not have been better for them to have served God, (then as they did) to have went on in their own Perverseness and Opposition.

*After all, What shall I say? God hath spoken thus, and himself shall do accordingly. I shall go softly, all my Tears in the Bitterness of my Soul.* As often as I do seriously and thoroughly reflect thereon, I have great heaviness and continual Sorrow of Heart. I do not speak this in Words of Course, or only in Scripture Phrase; But from an inward feeling of the same, and from the very Truth of the matter. For tho' I could never with my self Accursed from Christ, rather then that my Brethren and Kinsmen according to the Flesh should Perish. I have had yet a much greater concern for my nearest Kindred according to the Flesh (Altho' herein, *They have Rewarded me Evil for Good, and Hatred for my Love, Psal. 109. 10.*) Then for the rest of my Brethren and Sisters of the common stock of Mankind. Yet herein, I say the Truth in Christ I lie not, my Conscience also bearing me Witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have several times wished that my self had never came forth into Being, rather then I should know and see so many of my fellow Creatures, who are Flesh of my Flesh, and Bone of my Bone, go away into Everlasting Punishment and Misery. I have had that greatest Compassion and most Earnest sensible concern for them. For as it is Proverbially spoken of very ill weather *That one would not then have a Dog abide out of Doors:* So Eternal Damnation is such a Terrible and Miserable thing to them, who believe and apprehend it thoroughly, that one would not wish it to the greatest Enemy one had. I must confess again, that this great Compassion and Earnest concern, which I have formerly had for others, doth now go off and lessen with me. And what may seem yet more strange, It doth so even as I behold their continued Provocation and Repeated evil doing; which will more certainly seal them over unto the Day of their Destruction.

In this Temper of Mind I come yet more near to that of the Spirit, which saith on this wise, *Yet behold therein shall be left a Remnant that shall be brought forth, both Sons and Daughters. Behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way, and their doings: And ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem; even concerning all that I have brought upon it. And they shall comfort you when ye see their ways and their doings: And ye shall know that I have not done without cause, all that I have done in it, saith the*

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Lord God, Ezek. 14. 22, 23. There is so very much Malignity and Evil deserving in Sin, that when God Himself (which the Ministers of his Word do very faintly and imperfectly now) shall lay it open before his Saints and Servants, *As that they shall see their ways and their doings*, As we behold Dirt and Mire now, even they shall be Comforted concerning all the Punishment and Misery which he will lay upon the Inhabitants of the Earth, tho' it be upon their own Father, Mother, Brothers, Sisters, the Wife of their Bosom, the nearest Kinsfolks and Dearest Friends according to the Flesh. So that they shall not Pity the tender and delicate Man, who was most set out with Riches, Beauty, Good Breeding, or common good Nature (if it was mixt with Ungodliness or Contempt of God) Nor yet the tender and delicate Woman, which would not Adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for Delicateness and Tenderneſs, Deut. 28. 56. And How then will she undergo so much Pain and Fire? *And ye shall know that I have not done without cause* (without their deserving of it) which we shall more clearly perceive then tho' we cannot now; but we are apt to think it hard that Mankind should dye Eternally for tasting a little Honey, or for the Pleasures of Sin for a season) *all that I have done in it*, even in his utmost Vengeance and Everlasting Punishment, saith the Lord God, *Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the Days that I shall deal with thee? I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it*, Ezek. 22. 14. By the former Part of which Expression is shew'd forth, that God will overcome their former Stubbornness and Presumption, By the Punishment He will inflict, that He will get the Victory and make them to yield. In the latter part is the Ratification and Confirmation of it, *I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it*. As to all that foregoing Wickedness and Rebellion of the Jews, *Wherein they denied the Holy one and the just, and desired a Murderer to be granted unto them and killed the Prince of Life*, How doth Peter lay it before them and Assign the cause thereof? *And now Brethren, I wot that through Ignorance, ye did it, as also did your Rulers. But those things which God hath shewed by the Mouth of all his Prophets that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled*, Acts 3. 17, 18. When Himself was in the midst of his sufferings, He saith, *Thinkest thou that I cannot Pray my Father, and He shall presently give me more then twelve Legions of Angels*. (Who would have preserved and defended him from all those Wicked Men that were his Crucifiers) *But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled; that thus it must be*, Mat. 26. 53, 54. In like manner as to all that sin, Iniquity and Transgression, which God hath spoken of by the Mouth of all his Prophets, Evangelists and Apostles; It must needs go on in its Course, *That the Scriptures might be fulfilled*, Both as to that and also to the further end and consequent thereof, *When He shall Punish the World for their Evil, and the Wicked for their Iniquity*; And that will be found true also, *Which speaks of their*

Wide

*Wide Gate and Broad way that leadeth to Destruction, and many there be who go in thereat.* Mat. 7. 13. Amalek, was the first of the Nations, but his latter end shall be that he Perish for Ever, Numbers 23. 20. Tho' they are in the first, highest and most prosperous Wordly State, this hinders not, but rather sooner occasions, that they be miserable for ever, as we Learn from sundry other Places of the Word of Truth.

The Scripture doth stand Checquer wise, if I may so express it. It is made up of black and white, for therein is an intermixture of Promises and Threatnings, Good and Evil things, *Blessing and Cursing, Life and Death.* It is so almost in every Chapter. I shall instance in one, and mention the same use thereof that is there made. And as the Spirit of God doth make mention of the *Eloquent Orator*, Isa. 3. 3. It is a necessary part of Oratory to leave something with the Hearers at last, that it may surely stick and be remembred by them. At the close of this Discourse, I would observe unto ye, how, that in the Tenth Chapter of the *Hebrews*, there is an intermixture of Threatnings and Promises, Good and Evil things, for there is mention made, *Of a fearful looking for of Judgment and of Fiery Indignation which shall devour the Adversaries. Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his People, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God.* After all these terrible things to the Wicked and Ungodly, The Apostle speaks in a more mild strain unto the Christians, *Knowing in your selves, that in Heaven ye have a better and an enduring substance, and of a great Recompence of reward,* ver. 35. *After ye have done the Will of God, ye might receive the Promise,* ver. 36. But amidst and in the conclusion of all, He shews himself to be a faithful and skillful Workman, dividing the Word of Truth aright, and giving to every one his Portion, for he saith, *Now the just shall live by Faith, but if any Man draw back, My Soul shall have no Pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back into Perdition, but of them who believe unto the saying of the Soul.* So People are to take and receive in by Faith, all the things that have been afore-written. *They must live by Faith, if they will be justified and saved.* But if any of ye draw back, that is, go off and recede from his Truths, neither God, nor yet any of his Saints and Servants will have any Pleasure in that Man or Woman. But by the Divine Grace and Assistance, it shall be my constant and continued endeavour throughout all the remaining Days of this Life of Vanity, as I hope, and do hereby exhort that it may be of others also, that we be not found amongst them, upon whom the Word of God will have its effect to Condemnation, but not to Salvation; But rather that ye and my self (there is nothing in the World which I so much desire) may be found amongst them, who shall believe to the saving of the Soul.



*Hear this Word, O ye Princes, ye Priests  
and People of England; Especially such  
of ye as Assemble at Westminster,  
at this your Session begun, December 7.  
1698.*

**T**hen Saul said unto his Servants that stood about him,  
Hear, now, ye Benjamites, Will the Son of Jesse  
give every one of you Fields and Vineyards, and make  
you all Captains of Thousands and Captains of Hundreds?  
1 Sam. 22. 7. From hence may be understood the Reason  
of the Disobedience and Rebellion of the People  
of England unto those sundry Commandments of the  
Most High God, which from the Scriptures, I have  
laid before them: Namely, Because the Son-in-Law  
of ~~the King~~ doth give them Money, or Lands, or  
Places of Profit, and to those of the Priesthood,  
Bishopricks or Preferments, for the Sake and Love  
of which, they cast the Law of God behind their backs,  
Neh. 9. 26. and they do not give due heed and obe-  
dience unto the same. But let them consider fur-  
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by flatteries, and shall prosper until the indignation be accomplished, Dan. 11. 20, 21. 36.) hath gained one kingdom of the Earth, and ye have gained less Riches; But it will not profit ye, for the gain of them to lose your Souls, your Selves, and be Cast-aways; and ye cannot give them in exchange for your Souls: *They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever,* Psal. 49. 6, 7, 8. Again it is written, *Riches profit not in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivereth from death,* Prov. 11. 4. And again it is written, *Their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord; they shall not satisfie their souls nor fill their bowels, because it is the stumbling block of their iniquity,* Ezek. 7. 19. That is like as the goodly Babylonish Garment and two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold, tempted *Achan* to commit the accursed thing: So the silver and gold was the occasion or temptation of their falling into such an Iniquity; and so it was the *stumbling block of their Iniquity*. But it is evidently seen, for the like hath been already fulfilled in some of your Brethren and Companions of Iniquity, that in a few days, weeks, months, and years more, *An end is come, the end is come, behold it is come; The morning is come upon thee, O thou that dwellest in the land: The time is come, the day of trouble is near, and not the sounding again of the mountains: For the Trade of Sinning on still and working Iniquity will not last always: And then it will not profit ye, for all the conveniency, and pleasure, and respect, attending upon your Riches, to have your Souls sent unto Hell, although your Bodies rode enshrined in Coaches*  
whilst



whilst here on Earth. Like Sins will have like Ends. Consider the Example of *Balaam*, who loved the *wages of unrighteousness*; and of *Judas*, who Betrayed his Master, and *purchased a field with the reward of Iniquity*. It would be better for them now, if they had never loved the Wages of Unrighteousness, nor yet took the Reward of Iniquity; even so, some of ye have Betrayed your King and Master, and most of ye do allow the Deeds of them who did so, and ye are Partakers with them in the *Iniquity* (which signifies an unequal thing) done towards him: Because ye have those Places and Opportunities of Gain, Profit, and Reward, under this Constitution, which perhaps ye would not have had under the former Rightful Government. For your Gains-sake, ye will not know, but refuse, to do do Right, ye Heads of the House of *England*, and ye will not Obey the Commandments of the Lord, which enjoin People to *do Right*. Every Disobedience and Transgression receiveth a just recompence of Reward. Ye will find that it was a mistaken Interest to lose your Souls, even the temptation and bait of Satan, for him to catch and destroy them. Ye have not that *faith which oversometh the world* in its Terrours, Temptations, and Allurements. *But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition; for the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith:* For the true Christian Faith doth not allow of Rebellion against, and the Deposing and Murder of Kings; and for any to forswear themselves in not keeping unto that Oath of God, Eccles. 8. 2. they had taken to the *Governors* *sens by him*. But

thou, *O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness.* They afore-spoken off are not come up to that state of Mind as to think so, and make it their choice accordingly. *A little that a righteous man hath is better then the riches of many wicked,* Psal. 37. 16. *Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right,* Prov. 16. 8. for it will tend more to ones future, which is the only real and enduring Happiness. He that truly fears God, will not transgress the least Precept for the greatest Profit: But the Hypocrite (tho' he seems to be Religious, for he doth retain the outward Worship of God, and perhaps is zealous in some things, and pretends to be Righteous) is for getting and advancing himself in the World, whither the means be Sinful or not is no hindrance unto him. But *what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his Soul?* What good will they do him? Or, What stead and avail will they stand him in, when his Soul is taken away utterly from things for the sake of which he transgressed against the Lord? Such is the Case of those People I here write unto.

As a *Scribe instructed in the Law of God,* I have for these Nine years successively testified unto ye from out of his Law and Commandment, and with the words of *thy righteousness, even of thine only,* Psal. 71. 16. That ye have committed a Sin in Deposing ~~him~~ *him*. And that therein also, contrary unto his Commandment, ye have Forsworn your selves, and not performed unto the Lord your Oaths, but ye have *despised the Oath* in breaking the Covenant, *when lo ye had given your hand,* Ezek. 17. 11. When ye did perform Fealty and  
 swear

swear Allegiance and Subjection unto him, as then your *Governor sent by God*, 1 Pet. 2. 14, which the Divinely Inspired Apostle doth say even of Heathen Rulers, who are worse than Papists. But ye have Rebelled against him, and cast off all manner of Allegiance and Subjection unto him. This is plain and direct Forswearing your selves, and *not performing unto the Lord your Oaths*, when ye had sworn Allegiance and Subjection to such a King and Ruler, afterwards to cast off Allegiance and Subjection unto that King and Ruler, as now ye have done. So that ye have committed a Sin, and done wrong, and sworn falsely herein. And I do again hereby testifie unto, and exhort ye, who are thus in the way of transgressing the Word and Commandment of God, and in Rebellion against him, That ye come to Repentance in all this. If ye will not, I take Record this day, That as *Jeremiah* witnessed in his time unto the Inhabitants of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, *From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amos, king of Judah, even unto this day, which is the three and twentieth year, (which was ten years together) the word of the Lord hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking, but ye have not hearkened*, Jer. 25. 3. So for these nine years last past, I have only from the Law and Commandment of God, and with the Words of *his Righteousness*, wrote and testified unto ye, That herein ye have committed a Sin and Transgression, and as yet ye will not come to Repentance. Ye have done a wrong therein, and to this day ye will not make full Restitution. But ye do still Consent with the Counsel and Deed of them, *Who rob Father and Mother, and say it is no Transgression*. Which Scripture exprellion hath

been fulfilled in these days; For a certain Woman, (who is since dead) together with her Husband now living, did violently dispossess and take away (which is Robbery) her own Fathers Kingdom and Inheritance, and by putting him in Fear, caused him to seek his Bread in a Foreign Country. And they, together with corrupt Priests, and a mercenary People, say, *It is no Transgression.* But Sin is the Transgression of the Law, and it is a plain and direct Transgression of that Law of God, which saith, *Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbours House, nor any thing that is his. Thou shalt not Steal,* which forbids both secretly and also openly taking it from him. And so in the instance here mentioned, ye have Forsworn your selves, and not performed unto the Lord your Oaths in despising and falsifying the Oath of the Lord; and as to that also ye will not come to Repentance, so as to return again to your Allegiance and Subjection, unto that same Person whom ye had formerly sworn unto. As the Apostle saith, *Nay, I had not known Sin but by the Law; for I had not known Lust except the Law had said, Thou shalt not Covet.* So here, That all this is Sin, and Wrong, and Unrighteousness, and Swearing falsely, or Forswearing, it may be known and demonstrated by the Law of God, which saith, *Thou shalt not Covet, Thou shalt not forswear thy self, but perform unto the Lord thine Oath,* Matt. 5. 33.

Notwithstanding these things are so, as I here write, (not out of mine own head, but from the Statute Book of the Lord God) yet like those who said unto *Jeremiah*, Chap. 44. 15, 16, 17. *As for the word thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee, but we will certainly*



tainly do whatsoever thing goeth out of our own mouth, to burn Incense unto the Queen of Heaven, and to pour out Drink Offerings unto her, as we have done we and our Fathers, our Kings and our Princes in the cities of Judah, and in the Streets of Jerusalem; for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we have left off to burn Incense to the Queen of Heaven, and to pour out Drink Offerings unto her, we have been consumed by the Sword and by the Famine. The Reason is alike of the Rebellion and Disobedience of those I write unto. For as then they judged by temporal Events, because they thought it went better with them at that present time by their Disobedience and Refusal. So the Princes and Priests and People of this Land are ready to say, (it is known to God all one as if they did speak out so plainly, but yet do ye dare or presume to say, *We will not obey the Word and Commandment of God.* However, they will not do it in this thing) or at least so is the thought and purpose of their Hearts.

As for what things thou hast alledged unto us in the Name of the Lord, from out of his Law and Commandment, concerning the Sin thou sayest we have committed, and the Oath we have violated, we will not hearken unto thee, so as to come to Repentance and to make full Restitution, for now we are well and see no evil. Thou hast heretofore several times alledged unto us, that Declaration of God, *I will a swift witness be against false swearers, and against them that turn aside the stranger from his right*, Mal. 3. 7. And so it may be truly reasoned and applied as to those who turn aside a Papist from his Right. But,

How is this fulfilled? For doth it as yet appear, that God is a swift witness against false Swearers and against them that turn aside the Stranger (or Papist) from his Right? For it is evidently seen, that the false Swearers and Oppressors and Spoilers and Robbers of this kind, *The tabernacles of robbers prospers*, Job 12. 6. For these ten years together, and it may be for thirty or forty years more, *are well and see no evil*. They are altogether as, yea, more prosperous, in outward Estate, than if they had not been false Swearers at all, or as if they had not turned aside the Stranger (or Papist) from his Right. *But beloved, Be not ignorant of this thing, That one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his Promise, (nor yet is he slack to execute his threatnings) as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* I pray to God, that this his gracious end (for which he waits) may be answered in ye. For the Word of the Lord is unto ye Line upon Line, Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept, Precept upon Precept, here a little and there a little, to the intent that ye who are in Errour may return into the way of Righteousness. Be admonished and exhorted so to do. O be not willingly ignorant; as if such a thing was no Sin nor Transgression, or as if God would not be a *swift witness* against it, because he doth not presently strike the Sinner dead in his Sin: *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil.* May not any Sinner hence wrongly imagine, that God will not be a *swift witness*

*witness* against his Sin, because he doth for some time suffer the Sinner to live and continue therein. God may seem slow, but yet he will be sure to fulfill his Word in *punishing the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity*. A thousand years with him are but as one day. Though on this Earth he suffers it during all the course thereof, yet when Time shall be no longer it will be then seen, that God indeed will be a *swift witness* against all manner of Sin and Transgression.

Ay, But here ye may be apt to imagine, We are not Sinners and Transgressors, for we make Laws to suppress Vice, Immorality and Profaneness.

Which at first may seem Goodly and Commendable to *as many as have not known the depths of Satan*: But as the wise Man saith, That which hath been, is now, and there is no new thing under the Sun. So in the very last foregoing Generation, A certain man by name *Oliver Cromwell*, who like unto *Ahab*, did both *kill and also take possession*, 1 King. 21. 19. And like the Husbandmen, Who did *kill the heir that the inheritance might be theirs*, Mark 12. 7, 9. Even so he did cause the King to be Murdered, and then he took Possession of his House, Estate, and Government. And then, As we have heard with our Ears, and our Fathers have told us, This very same *Oliver Cromwell*, did set up for Reformation of Manners; as by punishing Adultery with Death, suppressing Drunkenness, Vain Curfing and Swearing, (although themselves had committed advised deliberate Perjuries) strict Observation of the Lord's Day, and such like. The Reasons which put him upon so doing, seem to be either an Act of close and deep Hypocrisy;  
(That

(*That the Hypocrite reign not least the people be ensnared, Job 34. 30.*) Thus to ingratiate himself with Godly and well-meaning People, and thereby to hide and cover before them his other Transgression. (*Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.*) Or else, fearing the Wrath and Punishment of God due to himself for the same, he did vainly hope, and wrongly imagine, to make Atonement and Expiation, or Commutation, for his own great Sin, by doing a kind of seeming good this way. O the depths of Satan! O the exceeding subtlety of the Old Serpent, in deceiving Sinners and Transgressours into Perdition and Condemnation. So it is at this day, *Our Princes are rebellious and companions of Thieves, every one loveth Gifts and followeth after Rewards*, Isaiah 1. 23. In the nature of things it is equally and all one (yea rather worse) Theft and Robbery to take away either by force or fraud, openly or privately, a great sum of Money as a small one: and so it is all one Theft and Robbery to take a great House and Estate, as it is to take a little one; and so it is as to a Kingdom, all one as to a Less Matter. The Gospel Command is, *That no man go beyond and defraud his brither in any matter*, 1 Thes. 4. 6. God himself reproves and finds fault, *When thou sawest a thief then thou consentedst with him; these things hast thou done, and I kept silent, thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thy self*, Psal. 50. 18, 21. As if, because God kept silence at the time, therefore it was God's doings, and his Cause, and he did approve of and was well pleased therewith; which is the Blasphemy of these days, and of the other late times of Iniquity. Now if in this case, *Murderers mentioned, Isaiah 1. 21. Rebels, Thieves, and Rob-*



*Robbers*, should set up for Reformers, all this and the like is not pleasing in the sight of God. Nor yet will thus doing avail the Sinners and Transgressours to turn away the Wrath and future Punishment of God from themselves; for the plain and expresse Declaration of Almighty God touching this matter, is, *The soul that sinneth it shall die. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness and committed iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live? All his righteousness (which takes in his other Righteousness and seeming Goodness) shall not be mentioned in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, (there it is pointed out exactly) in them shall he die, Ezek. 18. 20, 24.* Nor yet is thus doing pleasing and acceptable unto our Saviour Jesus Christ, for he saith; *With what measure you mete it shall be measured to ye again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brothers eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye: Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye, and behold a beam is in thine own eye. Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brothers eye, Matth. 7. 2, 3, 4, 5.* Ye Hypocrites, first, ye your selves, cease to do evil; Learn to do well, seek judgment: Relieve (in the Margent it is *Righten*, which signifies to set right again) the oppressed, *Isaiah 1. 16, 17.* Leave off Injustice, Wrong, Robbery, bearing False Witness, Covetousness, and know to do right, saith the Lord, who store up violence and robbery in your palaces, *Amos 3. 10.* One whercof is consumed by

Fare,

Fire, Job 15. 34. And turn from your sin, and do that which is lawful and right. Let the wicked restore the pledge, and give again that he hath robbed, Ezek. 33. 14, 15. And where ye have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, there restore to him fourfold. That is, Make full Restitution, if ye expect that Salvation should come to your Houses and Souls. After ye have done all this, ye will be more meet to discourage Vice, Immorality and Profaneness: God is alike dishonoured by those breaches of his law, Rom. 2. 23. as by these: And ye would be alike zealous against them as against the others, but that herein ye are the Sinners and Offenders your selves. Be not deceived, God is not mocked: He will not be so trifled withall nor deluded, so as to excuse your Sin and Transgression, (which in an *hard impenitent heart ye continue in, and thus treasure up to your selves wrath against the day of wrath.*) by your pretending to stop or prevent Sins of another kind in other People. Except ye Repent and turn from your own Iniquities, (and have *all Gods judgments before ye, and keep your selves from your iniquities*, Psal. 18. 22. 23.) ye will find that ye deceive your selves into everlasting Destruction and Condemnation.

Your Prince or Chief one, is for seeking to an Arm of Flesh, and doth not think himself safe without a Standing Army, (for *sinners and hypocrites are afraid and fearful*, Isaiah 33. 14.) as truly they have reason for it, all their hope being in this Life: But if he had a thousand thousand men for his Guard, they cannot preserve or defend him from that *wrath of God which is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness of men; for all that do unrighteously are an abomination unto the Lord*, Deu. 25. 16. and which will be executed upon the guilty, (*He will by no means clear*

*clear the guilty, Exod. 34. 7.)* after that this life shall be ended; no more then they can now preserve his Breath from going forth when the appointed time is come. All his Guards and Soldiers are but dying men themselves, whose Breath is in their Nostrils; and of such it is thus written, *Which are gone down to hell with their weapons of war; and they have laid their swords under their heads, but their iniquities shall be upon their bones, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living, Ezek. 32. 27.* He will find more safety then from them, if he will do according to the Command and Counsel of God; *Let the wicked forsake his way; and the unrighteous man his thoughts.* Break off thy Sins by Righteousness, and thine Iniquities, by making full Restitution where thou *hast wronged any man*, (here think upon thy deceased Wifes Father) *by false accusation*; if thou wouldst have Salvation (which signifies safety from all the evils of the other world) come to thy House and Soul.

By what is here written of *Truth and Meekness and Righteousness*, they are tried once more, whether the People who have been hitherto Disobedient and Rebellious, will obey God's Word, and tremble at his Commandment, and do according to his Law, Ezra 10. 3. My daily Prayer to God is, that they may do so; (for *my hearts desire and prayer to God for Israel, is, that they might be saved*;) I do hereby again exhort them unto it; though I fear, least through the subtlety of Satan, (who here makes use of that great and prevailing Temptation of Interest, Profit and Gain, all which will not be a sufficient compensation for the loss of their Souls) and he will hinder, tempt or deceive, that they should not obey unto Salvation; and then this will

will be the return which I shall make at last as to them ; *But unto Israel, (who were the outward worshippers) he saith, All the day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying People.*

*But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil. If ye will not obey, in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly ; and when the days of your Flesh are ended, and the time of your Probation and Trial is over ; and that also is expired and gone, when God gave ye a space to repent of your Iniquity, and ye repented not : Then ye will have Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish upon your Souls, that ye would not obey those his Laws and Commandments, which from out of the Book of the Lord, I a Scribe instructed therein, and bringing out of that treasury things new and old, have here set before ye.*



Because some of ye heretofore, instead of obeying the Word, have persecuted my outward Person, therefore it may seem expedient and necessary to annex this Notice and Advertisement.

*To all Rulers, Magistrates, and Officers of Justice;  
and to all others whom this following may any  
wise Concern :*

**W**Hereas I do only reprove Transgression, and exhort People to come again into the way of God's Commandments, I do set his Laws before Mankind, and I do publish his Eternal Truth. I do nothing more, beyond, or besides this, which again I do not out of mine own head, but only from the Statute Book of the Lord God. If ye think that I deserve to be imprisoned for so doing, and ye will be instrumental to confine me, God will judge, that ye and the other People do deserve Damnation, for not obeying those his Laws and Commandments, which from out of the same Book of Scriptures I have set before ye and them. And when your Breath is out of your Nostrils, and your Souls are departed from your Bodies, ye will receive yet greater Condemnation, and be beaten with more Stripes, for your thus doing unto me his Creature, who was sent and employed by him in the Ministration of his Word and Truth.

*So Warneth and Witnesseth,*

*Richard Hather*

*Practical*

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*Practical Books Written and Publishe d by Ri-  
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**O**F Happines : Wherein it is fully and particularly manifested, That the greatest Happines of this Life consisteth in the Fear of God and keeping his Commandments, in opposition to the Pleasures of Sin, or the pretended conveniency of Disobedience.

Rules and Directions for the prevention of and Recovery out of Sickness.

A Discourse against Partial Obediente : Or that dangerous Deceit so universal amongst them, who call themselves Christians of keeping some of the Commandments of God and neglecting others.

Some Thoughts of the Life to Come : With a brief account of the State of Religion, as it is now in the World.

The great Benefits of Christ to all that believe on and obey him : Being a Treatise on *Hebrems 2. 15.* Wherein it is shewed and made known how People may be freed and delivered from that slavish fear of Death, whereby they are subject to Bondage throughout their Life-time : and also how they may be saved and preserved from the Evil and Danger of Death when it shall approach nigh and come actually upon them.

An earnest Call to all the Inhabitants of the Earth, to Turn immediately to the Lord their God.

An Exhortation unto all Dissenters (however they are distinguished or named) to return into the Communion of the Church of *England* : so far, as all things are done herein, according to the Pattern shewed to us in the Gospel.

Six severall Sermons, Preached on *Isaiah 38. 1.* Wherein that great Duty of setting our Body and Soul in order, or we shall die, is at large opened and explained.

The Doctrine of the Crois, or the Duty of Christian suffering, in a Sermon, on *Mat. 13. 20, 21.*

A Sermon on *1 Chron. 29. 18.*

The Nature of Gods Kingdom and Dominion over Men, in a Discourse on *Deut. 8. 2.*

Divine Arithmerick Illustrated in the Right and Exact Jumbling of our Days, or a Discourse of the near and continued approaches of Death unto every one whatsoever.

The Extensivenes and Comprehensivenes of the future Judgment of God.

A Discourse of the Misery of Hell and Happiness of Heaven, Grounded from *Mat. 25. 46.*

A Discourse of Gods Hearing Prayer, Grounded from *John 9. 31.*

The observation of the three Great Festivals asserted in the Christian Church, and also the Right manner of the observance of them made known in a Sermon on *Col. 3. 1.* Preached on *Easter-Day.*

A Sermon Preached unto the Inhabitants of the Town of *Thorbury* in *Glocester-shire*, *March 20. 1697.* on *Psal. 143. 8.*

Two several Sermons, on *Phil. 4. 11, 12.*

The necessity of keeping still unto the Ordinances of Religion, Prayer, Hearing the Word, Baptism and the Lords Supper, in a Sermon on *Acts 6. 4.*

A Sermon concerning the Devices of Satan, on *2 Cor. 2. 11.*

*The exceeding Great Comfort and Benefit of having walked before God in Truth, and with a Perfect heart, and of having done that which is Good in his sight; Set forth in several Discourses, on Isaiah 38. 2, 3.*

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### Advertisement.

Besides those afore-mentioned, These are to give notice, That I have several other Practicall Sermons or Discourses of mine own Composing lying by me in Manuscript: Which if they who have the Plenty or Competency of this Worlds Goods, would (*According to their several Ability, Acts 11. 29.*) Thus Consecrate some part of their gain and substance unto the Lord, So as to be ready to Distribute, willing to Communicate towards the outward Labour and Charge of the Printing and Publishing of them, it would be for the Glory of God (*in making known his Truth.*) And for the Edification and Benefit of his Church and People; and consequently it would be a Good work in such Persons who shall be helpful and any ways assistant herein, for which they would be rewarded by God in the Life that is to come.

And I say unto you, Make to your selves Friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail they may receive you into Everlasting Habitations. Charge them that are Rich in this World that they do Good, that they be Rich in Good Works, ready to Distribute, willing to Communicate, laying up in Store for themselves a good Foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on Eternal Life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain Good Works; these things are Good and Profitable unto Men.



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